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THE LONDON BIRD REPORT

NUMBER TWENTY-TWO

FOR

1957



Published November 1958 by

THE LONDON NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

PRICE : FIVE SHILLINGS

The London Natural History Society

NOTICE OF INCREASE IN THE RATES OF SUBSCRIPTIONS

Since the subscription rates of the Society were last raised there has been a substantial increase in membership but, unfortunately, the resulting addition to our income has not been sufficient to keep up with the disproportionate rise in our running expenses, especially printing costs and postage.

At a Special General Meeting of members held on 22nd July, 1958, Council's recommendation was adopted and the following annual rates were authorized :—

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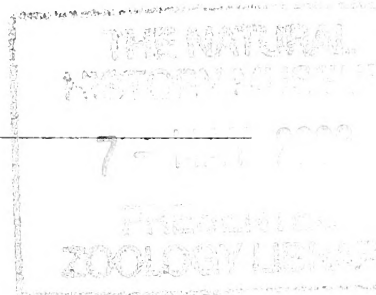
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THE LONDON BIRD REPORT

Number 22, 1957



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THE LONDON NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

THE LONDON BIRD REPORT

Edited by F. H. JONES

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Introduction

A PAPER by R. C. Homes on page 36 summarizes the information obtained during the first ten years of the Duck Counts in the London Area. It is clearly established that in the second half of the period, although there was not an unusual number of hard winters, the population of Mallard, Teal, Wigeon, Pochard and Tufted Duck in winter showed a substantial increase, and other species increased slightly or maintained their numbers. This appraisal of the status of these species in our Area would not have been possible but for the co-operation of a number of members of this Society whose assistance is gratefully acknowledged.

The Ornithological Section continues to take part in the Wildfowl Inquiry and the Census of Heronies, and during the year under review carried out a census of breeding Coot, and investigations into the distribution of the Meadow Pipit and the breeding distribution of the Lapwing. Further details of this aspect of the Section's work is given in the Recording Circular which may be obtained from the Recorders whose addresses are given in the Recording Arrangements on page 54.

Members are reminded that they could make a considerable contribution towards the earlier production of the *London Bird Report* by submitting their records promptly three times a year in accordance with the timetable published on page 54.

In the Bird Ringing Report on page 52 is given the names of the regional representatives who have been appointed to assist members interested in group ringing. The value of team work has been emphasized by the results achieved at the Beddington Ringing Station where 3,666

birds of 57 species were ringed in 1957. Details of some interesting recoveries are given in the systematic list under Cormorant, Heron, Greenshank, Black-headed Gull, Tits, Pied Wagtail, Goldfinch and Chaffinch.

The winter at the beginning of 1957 was mild, and there were no spectacular hard weather movements. However, an unusual number of Kittiwakes occurred in the Area in the first three months of the year, some of which died. There was a considerable wreck of Kittiwakes at this period, as described in *B.B. LI*, pp. 253-266, but most of the London Area records are not mentioned. An adult Gannet was found in a garden in Bermondsey in January, and another, dying, in a ploughed field at Dartford in February. On February 6th there was an Iceland Gull on Blackheath.

Records of wild geese were few, but seven Bewick's Swans were seen on January 17th and one on March 28th. A Raven was identified at Orpington on January 6th and 19th (and two on November 22nd and one on the 27th). Bramblings were scarce, but there was an influx in Surrey at the end of the winter. Crossbills were seen in January and there were up to 25 from mid-March to mid-April. Several Waxwings were seen in March.

The most noteworthy passerine, however, was a Yellow Wagtail which remained at Beddington S.F. throughout the winter, and was last definitely recorded on March 22nd, the first passage birds being present on March 24th; this is the first occasion on record on which this species has remained throughout the winter in Britain. Ruffs wintered at Perry Oaks S.F. for the third year in succession, and it seems likely that they winter also in the Thames marshes on our eastern border.

There were a number of very early records of spring migrants, including three Garganey on March 3rd, a Willow Warbler in song from March 4th until others arrived at the end of the month, and three Chiffchaffs in February and three in early March. Other occurrences of note in spring were Water Pipits on March 23rd and 24th, a Hoopoe on April 3rd and 10th, a Marsh Harrier on April 28th and several Bar-tailed Godwits at the end of April and in early May.

Twenty-three pairs of Little Ringed Plovers are known to have bred, of some 27-29 pairs summering. Two pairs of Ringed Plovers bred for the first time since 1901, one at Rye Meads S.F., the other at Stone, Kent. Building operations continue to reduce the suitable habitat in the City, but at least one pair of Black Redstarts bred there, and other cocks were seen. It is hoped to publish a paper in a future *L.B.R.* tracing the decline of this species in Inner London. One pair of Common Sandpipers bred at Old Parkbury, and another pair was present. The number of occupied Heron's nests increased by 20 to 195.

There were several unusual occurrences during the summer: a Black-throated Diver remained at Walthamstow Res. until June 22nd, having attained summer plumage in May; a Goshawk at Staines on June 16th was the third in three years; an immature Crane at Rainham Marsh on July 19th was the first definite record of this species for our Area since 1900.

The irruption of Tits and other species which was a noteworthy feature of the autumn movements in south-eastern England, was especially noticeable in Inner London. A brief note appears in the systematic list, and a paper should be ready for publication in the next *L.B.R.* There were no reports of widespread movements of the commoner diurnal migrants such as Chaffinches and Starlings, and Pied Flycatchers were scarcer than they have been for several years. A Firecrest was seen on October 2nd, and on the 6th a Lesser Grey Shrike was identified near Perry Oaks S.F., the second record for our Area in the present century. There was a Lapland Bunting on Wimbledon Common on November 3rd.

An exceptional number of Little Stints arrived at the end of September; there were *c.* 40 at Perry Oaks S.F. and smaller numbers elsewhere, but they soon passed on. Four Temminck's Stints were seen in August and September, and there was a Pectoral Sandpiper at Rye Meads S.F. on September 9th.

There were several reports of Grey Phalaropes and Puffins during September, and in the same month there were Leach's Petrels on the 15th and 27th, an Arctic Skua on the 29th, and an immature Mediterranean Black-headed Gull (only the second for the London Area) on the 19th. Other Puffins occurred in November and December and Little Auks on November 9th and 10th. Six Eiders arrived at King George VI Res. on November 12th, and one at the Girling Res. on November 30th, the second and third records for the London Area; there were a number of inland occurrences of Eiders at this period. Lesser Black-backed Gulls were again numerous on the autumn passage, and a roosting flock at the Girling Res. on October 19th was estimated at 3,300.

Several Waxwings were reported in November and December, while there was a Chiffchaff at Perry Oaks S.F. on December 27th, and 24 Ruffs there the same day.

The number of species satisfactorily identified in our Area during the year was 194.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Records Committee wishes to thank all those who have contributed to this Report, and to welcome new members to the Society. We gratefully acknowledge assistance given by the following: Mrs. M. Medhurst, Mrs. R. E. Teagle, L. Baker, R. E. Emmett, G. Lambourne, E. R. Parrinder, and C. A. Walker; R. A. Richardson for the drawing of Coal Tits on the cover; the Editors of *British Birds*, the officers of the Essex Bird Watching and Preservation Society, the Hertfordshire Natural History Society, the Kent Ornithological Society, the Surrey Bird Club, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, the Zoological Society of London, the Committee on Bird Sanctuaries in the Royal Parks, the Ruislip Natural History Society and the Whitgift School Selborne Society for exchanges of records and information. We have also to acknowledge many kindnesses from the Metropolitan Water Board, the London County Council, the Middlesex County Council, the Croydon Corporation and Harlow Development Corporation.

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* Records for Surrey made available by the Surrey Bird Club.

BIRDS OF THE LONDON AREA, 1957

A REPORT OF THE BIRD LIFE WITHIN TWENTY MILES OF ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL

THIS report follows the British Ornithologists' Union's "Check-List of the Birds of Great Britain and Ireland" (1952) based on the Wetmore classification, and the numbers preceding each species refer to that List where the full scientific name will be found. The vernacular names are those adopted by the Editors of *British Birds* magazine as announced in the January, 1953, issue (Vol. XLVI, p. 1).

All records are for 1957 except where otherwise stated. The initials following each record refer to the observer(s) responsible for it, whose name(s) may be obtained by reference to the list of contributors on page 4.

The six counties within the circle of twenty miles radius are indicated by their initials, *viz.*:— B = Bucks ; E = Essex ; H = Herts ; K = Kent ; M = Middlesex ; S = Surrey. Several of the Lea Valley reservoirs are partly in Middlesex, but all records referring to them are published under Essex, following the policy adopted by W. E. Glegg in his histories of the birds of Essex (1929) and Middlesex (1935). The following abbreviations are also used:— *B.B.* = *British Birds* magazine ; *L.B.R.* = *London Bird Report* ; P.D.S.A. = People's Dispensary for Sick Animals ; R.S.P.C.A. = Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals ; G.P. = gravel pit ; Res. = reservoir ; S.F. = sewage farm ; m.o. = many observers ; N., E., S., and W. are used for the cardinal points of the compass, but are intended only to indicate the general direction of flight.

An open map of the London Area will be found useful for a full appreciation of many of the records. As the history of some of the species is intended to be continuous, reference to the systematic list of previous issues of the *L.B.R.* is recommended.

Records which have been published in the *Essex Bird Report*, 1957, are indicated by an asterisk which is placed by the particular record or, where all records of a species have been published, by the county initial "E."

1 Black-throated Diver

- E* King George V Res., an immature from Nov. 9th to 24th (five observers). Walthamstow Res., the bird which was present at the end of 1956 (see *L.B.R.*, 21, p. 7) remained until June 22nd, having attained summer plumage in May (six observers).
- M Queen Mary Res., one on Dec. 21st (cmv). Staines Res., one from Sept. 29th to Oct. 8th (m.o.).
- S Molesey Res., one from Dec. 21st to 28th (five observers).

4 Red-throated Diver

- E* Girling Res., one on Jan. 19th (JLFP). King George V Res., one on Feb. 17th (JLFP). Walthamstow Res., one on Nov. 17th (JF, ARM).
 M Staines Res., one on Feb. 9th and 10th (BEC, SG, ARM).
 K Stone, one on Jan. 27th and Feb. 10th (WIB).

6 Red-necked Grebe

- E* Walthamstow Res., one from Oct. 26th to Nov. 17th (seven observers).
 H Old Parkbury G.P., one on Mar. 2nd (EHW).

7 Slavonian Grebe

- E* Girling Res., one on Jan. 19th and 27th (JLFP). Walthamstow Res., one on Feb. 5th (BSMS).
 M Staines Res., single birds on Oct. 5th and 6th (six observers).

8 Black-necked Grebe

- E* Girling Res., two to three from Oct. 12th to Nov. 17th (BSMS, JLFP). King George V Res., one on Nov. 24th (FR).
 H Hilfield Park Res., one on Jan. 21st (GBDC). Rye Meads S.F., one on Oct. 9th and 10th (LL).
 M Brent Res., single birds on Apr. 8th and 10th (DWT, EHW), and Nov. 16th (LAB). Queen Mary Res., one from Sept. 15th to Oct. 27th (five observers). Staines reservoirs, one in summer plumage on Apr. 7th and 13th (five observers): up to four on many dates from June 30th to Nov. 17th (m.o.).
 S Barn Elms Res., single birds on Aug. 24th (RKC), and Nov. 2nd (HPM).

12 Leach's Petrel

- M Queen Mary Res., one seen at close range on Sept. 15th (BEC, JFC, MEN); satisfactory details have been supplied. Staines Res., one found dead on Sept. 27th (DEDC, ARM).

27 Gannet

- K Dartford, one found dying in a ploughed field about the third week of February (PHM).
 S Inner London: Bermondsey, an adult found in a garden on Jan. 18th (NW).

28 Cormorant

Recorded in every month; up to 70 in the winter months at King George VI Res., Middx. A roost in elm trees at Wraysbury, Bucks, at which eight or nine birds were seen on Aug. 29th, has been in use for several years; as many as 24 birds have been seen arriving from the direction of the Staines reservoirs at dusk (MEA). One ringed at the Farne Islands, Northumberland, as a nestling, on June 13th was found injured at Walthamstow Res. on Dec. 23rd.

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29 Shag

- E* Walthamstow Res., an immature present from Jan. 1st to May 11th was first seen on Nov. 10th, 1956 (JF, RBW).
M King George VI Res., one on Jan 2nd (CAW).

30 Heron

- The number of occupied nests at the heronries was 195, an increase of 20 over 1956. Details of two recoveries of ringed birds, and records for Inner London, are also given below.
- E *Little Parndon, six occupied nests (FHJ). *Walthamstow Res., 80 occupied nests (WHD, AG, PFCR). A nestling ringed here on April 30th, 1955, was recovered near Strathaven, Lanarkshire, on February 24th, 1957. Wanstead Park, one occupied nest (GW). A nestling ringed at Wytham, Berks, on May 22nd, 1952, was recovered at Chingford, on June 1st, 1957.
- M Kempton Park, 88 occupied nests (EMG). Inner London: Bloomsbury, one perched on the parapet of the Senate House on Dec. 23rd (EHW); St. James's Park, one recorded on various dates from January to May 7th; two present on Jan. 29th; from Oct. 14th onwards one to three were frequently seen and on Dec. 20th, four. Prior to the cold spell in December, 1955, it was most unusual for a Heron to spend more than a few hours in St. James's Park (JFC, DGH, ABMM).
- S Gatton Park, 12 occupied nests (HB). Richmond Park, eight occupied nests (BAM).

38 Bittern

- H Rye Meads S.F., one released from a barbed wire fence on Aug. 30th (LL).

47 Garganey

- E* King George V Res., three on Mar. 3rd, an early date (DK, FR).
H Old Parkbury G.P., a duck on Apr. 11th (EHW). Rye Meads S.F., four from Aug. 16th to 21st (GJH, JLFP).
M Brent Res., a pair from Apr. 3rd to 19th (LAB, EHW). King George VI Res., a drake on Apr. 23rd and 24th (JS).

49 Gadwall

- H Hilfield Park Res., one on Feb. 17th (BLS). Old Parkbury G.P., two on Jan. 27th (GBDC). Rye Meads S.F., a duck on Apr. 27th and 28th (TWG, BSMS).
M Brent Res., two to three from May 22nd to July 13th (LAB). Hampton Res., one on Oct. 6th (JGS). Queen Mary Res., a drake on Dec. 8th and three on the 21st (JFC, CMV). Staines reservoirs, up to three from Jan. to Apr. 7th; six on Sept. 15th and one to two until the end of the year (m.o.).
S Barn Elms Res., present throughout the year; on May 18th nine young about seven days old were seen (JI), and on July 28th two

ducks, both with four young about 14 days old (HPM). Richmond Park, three on Jan. 2nd and 6th (BEC, EDB); two on Aug. 18th and three on the 25th; then up to 19 from Sept. 29th to Nov. 23rd when numbers were low at Barn Elms Res.; two on Nov. 30th and Dec. 28th (EDB).

52 Pintail

- E King George V Res., four on Apr. 13th (JLFP).
 H Hilfield Park Res., a duck on Nov. 17th and Dec. 22nd (BLS).
 M Staines reservoirs, single drakes on Jan. 2nd, Nov. 23rd and Dec. 15th (JFC, SG, DGH, CAW).

55 Scaup

Many records of from one to three at reservoirs and gravel pits throughout our Area with the exception of Kent from January to April and from October to December. Unusual dates were May 26th, a drake at *King George V Res., Essex (JLFP), and Aug. 21st, a drake at Staines Res., Middx. (EHW). At *Nazeing G.P., Essex, there were five on Nov. 9th and nine on the 10th (TWG, BN).

- M Inner London : St. James's Park, a drake on Feb. 22nd and 26th (TLB, WEH).

56 Tufted Duck

Breeding season records only are given.

- E Fishers Green G.P., five pairs during the breeding season (BSMS). *Nazeing G.P., three pairs bred (BSMS, JLFP). *Walthamstow Res., two pairs bred (JF).
 H Cheshunt G.P., two pairs bred (BSMS). Maple Cross, at least six pairs bred (BPP). Waltham Cross G.P., four pairs present but no evidence of breeding (BSMS).
 M Brentford, a duck with three small young on Aug. 1st (CAW). Staines Moor, a duck with five small young on July 14th (EAB). Stoke Newington, three-four pairs bred successfully at Clissold Park (JHB). Inner London: breeding took place at Kensington Gardens (one pair), St. James's Park, Regent's Park (four pairs), and Victoria Park (EPB, JFC, WHD, EHG, EHW *et al.*). The species had not bred in Regent's Park since 1944; one of the ducks was pinioned, but the other birds were wild.
 K Chevening Park Lake, a pair on July 20th (HFG). Ruxley G.P., a brood of four at the end of July (FJH).
 S Barnes Pond, about three pairs bred (EDB). Kew Gardens pond, four broods seen on Aug. 14th (GHG). Richmond Park, three pairs bred at the Pen Ponds but no young survived; a duck with six young on Adams Pond on Sept. 3rd (EDB, GHG).

57 Pochard

Breeding records only are given.

- E* Nazeing G.P., a duck with small young on July 13th (BSMS).

- H Cheshunt G.P., two pairs present, one of which bred successfully (BSMS).
- M Inner London: St. James's Park, at least two pairs bred ; Regent's Park, at least four pairs bred (six observers).
- S Inner London: Battersea Park, two pairs bred successfully (JNAR)

60 Goldeneye

- E Lea Valley reservoirs and Nazeing G.P., recorded up to Mar. 24th and from Nov. 2nd, maximum 28 at *Girling Res. on Dec. 22nd (JLFP *et al.*). *Hornchurch, one at Harrow Lodge Park on Nov. 16th (RS).
- H Hilfield Park Res., one to two from Jan. 18th to Mar. 28th (FJL, BSMS, BLS, EHW); up to four from Nov. 24th to the end of the year (JFCD, RAC, JDM, BLS).
- M Brent Res., one on Jan. 26th (GBDC). Hampton, two at Stain Hill Res., on Nov. 24th; Kempton Park Res., one on Dec. 22nd (Wildfowl census). Queen Mary Res., eight Jan. 27th, nine Mar. 23rd; up to four in Oct. and Dec., but 20 on Dec. 21st (CMV, Wildfowl census). Staines Res., recorded up to May 5th and from Oct. 20th, maximum 21 on Mar. 3rd (JI *et al.*).
- K Danson Park Lake, one on Dec. 16th (WIB).
- S Barn Elms Res., two on Dec. 14th (JFC, JI). Island Barn Res., one on Mar. 24th (Wildfowl census). Walton reservoirs, recorded January to March and in November and December, maximum 11 on Dec. 21st and 26th (BEC, JFC *et al.*).

61 Long-tailed Duck

- H Hilfield Park Res., one on Nov. 24th (BLS).
- M King George VI Res., an immature from Nov. 23rd to the end of the year (m.o.).
- S Island Barn Res., an immature from Jan. 6th to Feb. 4th (m.o.).

62 Velvet Scoter

- E* Girling Res., one on Nov. 30th (JLFP).

64 Common Scoter

- E Girling Res., one on Nov. 16th (JLFP). King George V Res., single birds on Apr. 28th (DK), and Nov. 9th and 30th, three on Nov. 21st (JCE, BSMS, JLFP, FR). Walthamstow Res., one from Sept. 28th to 30th (JF).
- M Brent Res., two July 31st, one Sept. 6th (LAB, FJL). Queen Mary Res., one on Oct. 20th (BEC, JFC, MEN, JGS). King George VI Res., a drake on Mar. 28th (EHW). Staines Res., six on Nov. 9th a drake Nov. 17th (PRC, DGH).
- S South Norwood lake, one on Mar. 22nd (DAW). Walton G.P., one on Jan. 19th (NFS).

67 Eider

- E* Girling Res., an immature drake from Nov. 30th to Dec. 29th (JLFP *et al.*).
 M King George VI Res., six, three of which were immature drakes, from Nov. 12th to Dec. 1st (SG *et al.*). The first record for Middlesex and only the second for the London Area.

69 Red-breasted Merganser

- H Hilfield Park Res., one on Dec. 1st (JDM, BLS).
 M King George VI Res., a female on Dec. 8th (HPM).
 Staines Res., three on May 1st and 2nd (EAB, HPM); a duck on Dec. 15th and 22nd (BEC, JFC, SG).
 S Walton Res., two drakes on Jan. 5th (NFS); two on Dec. 21st, three on the 26th (BEC, JFC, SG).

70 Goosander

Recorded up to May 5th and from Nov. 10th; maxima for the main localities only are given.

- E* Girling Res., 29 on Dec. 29th (BSMS). *King George V Res., 35 on Jan. 19th and Dec. 28th (JLFP, FR).
 M Queen Mary Res., 30 on Dec. 8th (JFC). Staines Res., 83 on Mar. 10th (DGH).
 S Barn Elms Res., 27 on Feb. 2nd (CAWF). Island Barn Res., 30 on Feb. 4th (BEC). Walton Res., 182 on Jan. 27th (Wildfowl census).

71 Smew

Recorded up to Mar. 24th and from Nov. 23rd; maxima for the main localities, a record for Inner London, and unusual numbers on Hampstead Heath only are given.

- E Walthamstow Res., 22 on Feb. 9th (JF).
 M Brent Res., 25 on Jan. 5th (LAB). Staines Res., c.45 on Feb. 3rd (BEC, SG). Hampstead Heath, present, normally on the Lower Highgate Pond, on most dates from Jan. 1st to Mar. 9th, with a maximum of 21 on Feb. 22nd; there are only four previous records, each of a single bird (GT). Inner London: Kensington Gardens, a red-head on the Long Water on Dec. 31st (CHH, JHFM, CHFP).
 S Barn Elms Res., 50 on Jan. 19th (PRC).

73 Shelduck

- E *Fishers Green G.P., two flying N. on Mar. 24th (BSMS). *King George V Res., five on May 4th, 12 on the 21st, seven on the 22nd and 23rd (DK, JLFP, FR); one on Oct. 2nd (PRC). West Thurrock, one on Apr. 11th and four on the 22nd (RH, LW).
 H Hilfield Park Res., five on Jan. 17th (JFCd, RAC). Old Parkbury G.P., one on Dec. 22nd (GBDC). Rye Meads S.F., one on Aug. 29th (LL, JLFP).

- M Brent Res., one on several dates in January and February (LAB, MDK, ARM, DWT); three on Sept. 7th (LAB). Perry Oaks S.F., one May 19th (REE); an immature first seen Aug. 28th, found dead on Sept. 14th (five observers). Ponders End S.F., one on Aug. 29th (FR). Queen Mary Res., five on May 5th (MDK). Staines Res., one Feb. 2nd, two Apr. 13th and four on the 27th (PEB, JI, REE).
- K Swanscombe Marshes, several records from Mar. 30th to May 27th and in July and August (PCB, RJF, FJH).
- S Island Barn Res., 16 on Apr. 13th (DP).

76 White-fronted Goose

- M Brent Res., 23 flying N.W. on Jan. 13th (DWT).

75-78 Grey Geese

- M Highgate, three flying N.E. on Mar. 14th (GBDC). Ruislip, 23 flying W. on Jan. 13th (IGJ). Southgate, 19 flying N.W. at Broomfield Park on Dec. 6th (FJL).
- K Biggin Hill, five flying W.S.W. on Oct. 12th (ADB). Catford, 10 flying W. on Jan. 15th (PCB).

82 Canada Goose

Breeding records only are given

- E* Walthamstow Res., a pair from Apr. 3rd to May 19th appeared to attempt nesting (JF, JLFP, RBW).
- K Kelsey Park, a full winged pair reared five young (AWB, AJP).
- S Cobham, a pair bred in Painshill Park (DP).

86 Bewick's Swan

- H Hilfield Park Res., six adults and an immature on Jan. 17th (JFCD, RAC).
- M Staines Res., one on Mar. 28th (EHW).

91 Buzzard

- M/S Inner London: Westminster/Lambeth, one over the Thames on Sept. 12th (GHG).

94 Goshawk

- M Staines Res., on June 16th, one seen soaring over King George VI Res. by WNM and CAW later flew past the observers at a range of c. 50 yards. The following details have been extracted from the notes submitted by CAW.

The outline was quite distinct from Sparrowhawk not only in greater size, but in the very broad blunt wings and the very long tail, which in some respects tended to take away the spread of the wing. Its general colouring was that of Sparrowhawk and the most distinct feature that I noticed, apart from the size and outline, was that the

feathers under vent and base of tail were whitish and that this extended also to the side of the rump and was especially noticeable when it twisted away from us when it was fairly close. I did not obtain any head markings. The soaring (seen at long range) appeared to be very similar to that of a Sparrowhawk, but it was obviously too large for that species when compared with Black-backed Gulls which were also soaring in the area. So far as could be judged it approached Buzzard size, but the shape and angle of the wings were not of that species. Judging by its size (and perhaps colouring), I should say it was an adult female.

99 Marsh Harrier

- M Staines-London Airport, on Apr. 28th an immature or female was seen hunting along the banks of King George VI Res., and later hunting on London Airport (DB, PRC, PJH, BN, BPP). This is only the second record for Middlesex; the first is published in the additions to *L.B.R.s* for previous years in this report.

104 Hobby

- M Perry Oaks-Staines, single birds seen on many dates from Apr. 27th to Sept. 4th (m.o.).
S Epsom S.F., one on Apr. 27th and 28th (BEC, MJC).

105 Peregrine

- H One near Elstree on Dec. 1st (JW).
M Staines Res., one on Feb. 20th (EAB). Inner London: St. James's Park, one following Starlings on Sept. 27th (EHG).
S Beddington S.F., one on Feb. 24th (HPM).

107 Merlin

- E* Hainault Lodge, one harrying roosting starlings on Jan. 19th and 21st (ACP, DJS).
M Mill Hill, single males on Mar. 13th and Oct. 27th (EHW).

110 Kestrel

- M Inner London: South Kensington, one pair nested at the Imperial Institute but reared no young (RWH, RET).

115 Red-legged Partridge

Breeding reported from the following:

- E Fishers Green and Nazeing (BSMS).
H Cheshunt and Hoddesdon (BSMS); Hilfield Park Res., Radlett, London Colney and Shenley (GBDC).
M Enfield Chase, Enfield Lock and Trent Park (BSMS); Osterley Park, Stanwell and Stanwellmoor (DGH).
K Bean, Longfield and Stone (WIB)
S Beddington S.F. (BRS).

117 Quail

H Chorleywood, one calling in early July (KMD).

119 Crane

E* An immature at Rainham Marsh on July 19th (BPH). The first definite record of this species for the London Area since 1900. Details have been published in *E.B.R.*, 1957, p. 14. Enquiries as to whether it might have escaped from captivity brought negative results.

120 Water Rail

Frequently reported in winter and on passage. Present up to the end of July at Rye Meads S.F., Herts. (TWG).

127 Coot

H An unusually large flock of 1,130 was reported at Hilfield Park Res. on Dec. 15th (BLS).

M Inner London: Kensington Gardens, two pairs attempted to breed but nests were robbed (CHFP); St. James's Park, 25 pairs bred, of which five built rudimentary nests and probably did not lay; about 25 young reared; the maximum number recorded in winter was 167 on Jan. 22nd (SC, DGH).

S Inner London: Battersea Park, seven pairs bred (JNAR).

131 Oystercatcher

E* Girling Res., one on Nov. 30th (JLFP).

M Brent Res., one on Nov. 30th (LAB). King George VI Res., one on Mar. 28th (EHW) and seven on Aug. 6th (FRT). Southgate, one flying over on Nov. 30th (BSMS). Stanwellmoor G.P., one flying N. on Sept. 21st (DGH).

K Swanscombe Marshes, one on Sept. 8th (RJF).

S Barn Elms Res., one on May 5th (DWT, CAWR). Streatham, heard calling at 23.15 hrs. on Sept. 1st, probably several birds involved (HPM).

134 Ringed Plover

Breeding was reported for the first time since 1901. At Rye Meads S.F., Herts, a pair was present from May to July, and were seen with two young still incapable of flight on July 21st and 24th (TWG, BLS). See *B.B.*, *L*, p. 491. At Stone, Kent, a pair was present and a clutch of four eggs was seen on May 16th, but in June, the nest was empty (FJH). The possibility of confusion with Little Ringed Plover was definitely excluded in both cases.

Spring passage from Apr. 14th to June 2nd with the peak in May. On May 9th, 55 were seen at Perry Oaks S.F., Middx., by JS, following a change of wind to S.W. after a long period of persistent N. winds. *Autumn* passage from July 6th to Nov. 9th, but mainly in August and September, the maximum in one flock being 44 at Perry Oaks S.F. on Aug. 25th.

There were a number of winter records from the Thames marshes, and single birds were present at the Girling Res., Essex, on Nov. 24th and Dec. 15th.

135 Little Ringed Plover

The number of pairs summering (27-29) was only a small increase on 1956 (25), but 23 pairs were proved to be breeding against 15 in 1956.

- E* Nine or ten pairs were located, at five sites; six pairs are known to have nested and two more probably bred (JLFP *et al.*).
- H Ten pairs are known to have nested in widely separated parts of the county; at least two attempted a second brood (TWG, JLFP, EHW, LW, *et al.*).
- M At least five pairs summered and four pairs are known to have nested. In addition up to ten were seen in May, July and August at Perry Oaks S.F. and up to three at Ponders End S.F. from the end of July to Sept 4th (BAGH, DGH, JI *et al.*).
- K One or two were seen on the Thames marshes in April, June and September; a party of four on Aug. 2nd included two juveniles but there was no direct evidence of nesting (WIB, FJH).
- S Three or four pairs nested at a gravel pit but only four or five chicks are known to have reached the free-flying stage (DP). Up to eight birds were seen at Hersham S.F. in July and up to three at Esher S.F. from early August to Oct. 1st (m.o.).

139 Grey Plover

- H Rye Meads S.F., one on Apr. 13th (TWG).
- M Staines Res., single birds on Apr. 15th and May 5th, the latter in full summer plumage (WGB, BEC, JFC, SG); one on Sept. 29th (PRC). Perry Oaks S.F., two on Aug. 24th and one on Sept. 29th (six observers).
- K Stone Marshes, one on Aug. 9th (JFB).

140 Golden Plover

North of the Thames: reported frequently outside the breeding season from S.W. Middx., Herts and Essex; the only flocks exceeding 100 were *c.* 160 at Rye Meads S.F. on Sept. 18th (TWG), and the wintering flock in the Shenleybury area in Herts where the maximum was *c.* 300 on Feb. 3rd (EHW). South of the Thames: the only records were of two at Swanscombe Marsh, Kent, on Dec. 15th (WIB), and five on Dec. 21st and one on the 26th at Epsom S.F., Surrey (DP, AQ, JGS).

143 Turnstone

- E* Single birds at Girling Res. on Sept. 30th (DK), King George V Res. on May 26th (JLFP) and Walthamstow Res. on Aug. 24th (FRT).
- M King George VI Res., one on May 1st (EHW); one on July 28th and Aug. 25th (BEC, CAW). Perry Oaks S.F., two on May 13th and 16th

(JS); one Aug. 24th to 28th (m.o.). Staines Res., single birds on May 5th (JFC, SKR) and Aug. 25th (BEC).

K Swanscombe Marshes, one to two Sept 12th to 18th (RJF).

145 Snipe

Bred at Rye Meads S.F., Herts, at least two pairs (BSMS), Beddington S.F., Surrey, two pairs (BRS), and Epsom S.F., Surrey, one pair (HB).

147. Jack Snipe

Outside the breeding season, records of up to five were frequent. Larger numbers were present at the beginning of the year at Beddington S.F., maximum 18 (BRS), Epsom S.F., maximum 25 on Feb. 16th (MJC), and Hersham S.F., 10 on Jan. 20th (DP). There were 30 at Epsom S.F. on Nov. 23rd (JGS).

148 Woodcock

Records for the breeding season and for Inner London are given.

E* Thorndon Park, seen on several occasions during breeding season (five observers). Warley/Childerditch, one roding on several dates in June (MSF).

M Inner London: South Kensington, one flew into the gardens of the British Museum (Natural History) on Dec. 17th (DG).

S Roding noted at Bookham Common, Esher Common, Godstone, Headley Heath, Kingswood/Tadworth, Mickleham (Norbury Park), and Oxshott (Princes Coverts). One was seen in Richmond Park on June 16th by EDB.

150 Curlew

Fewer reported than usual, all during the spring and autumn passages with the exception of two winter records. Thirty were seen flying S.W. at Staines Res., Middx. on Aug. 17th (SG) and there were 24 at King George V Res., Essex, on Aug. 28th (FR).

151 Whimbrel

E *King George V Res., 20 on Apr. 23rd and two on May 5th (DK, BSMS, FR). Rainham Marsh, one on July 26th (BPH, MR). *Sewardstone, 28 on Apr. 25th (FR). *Walthamstow Res., six on July 20th and nine on the 22nd were flying S.; one on Aug. 5th (JF, JLFP).

H Rye Meads S.F., one on Sept. 18th (TWG).

M Hampstead Heath, one heard calling on Aug. 28th (JI). Ponders End S.F., one on May 11th (FR). King George VI Res., one on July 31st (MEN). Staines Res., single birds on May 14th (EAB) and Aug. 5th and 7th (NHP, JGS).

S Beddington S.F., three on May 6th, and two flying S.E. on July 16th (HPM). Walton Res., two on May 18th (SG).

154 Black-tailed Godwit

- M King George VI Res., seven on Aug. 17th (BEC, SG, MEN). Perry Oaks S.F., two on July 13th and 14th (eight observers), seven on Aug. 18th (BWC), and one on Sept. 5th (SG).
- S Beddington S.F., one on Aug. 14th and 15th (JC, RGR).

155 Bar-tailed Godwit

- E* Walthamstow Res., two in summer plumage from Apr. 30th to May 2nd (JF).
- H Hilfield Park Res., one from Apr. 26th to 28th (JFCD, RAC).
- M London Airport and Perry Oaks S.F., one in summer plumage on Apr. 27th and 28th (PEB, BWC, PRC, BPP). Staines Res., one in full summer plumage on May 5th (BEC, JFC, SG). King George VI Res., one found on May 26th had probably been dead for about two to three weeks (PRC). Probably these records refer to one bird only. Queen Mary Res., two on Sept. 15th (BEC, JFC, MEN).
- S Barn Elms Res., one in summer plumage from Apr. 26th to May 1st (BEC, FCR, WHT, CAWF).

156 Green Sandpiper

Again recorded in every month of the year, but most frequent on the spring and autumn passages. Numbers did not exceed ten except at Rye Meads S.F., Herts, where the maximum in spring was 14 on Apr. 18th (TWG); in autumn, birds were present throughout the period July to September, the maxima for these months being 21 on July 26th, 20 on Aug. 13th and 23 on Sept. 8th.

157 Wood Sandpiper

- H Rye Meads S.F., single birds on May 5th and 26th and June 18th and 30th (BSMS, JLFP), from July 17th to Aug. 14th and two on Sept. 3rd and 9th (TWG, JLFP, BLS).
- M Perry Oaks S.F., one July 17th, up to six from Aug. 23rd to Sept. 3rd, two Sept. 7th and 8th, and three Sept. 21st (m.o.). Ponders End S.F., one from Aug. 13th to 18th (FR *et al.*).
- K Swanscombe Marsh, one on Sept. 4th (RJF).
- S Beddington S.F., two May 26th, one from Aug. 24th to 30th (BRS). Epsom S.F., four from May 25th to 29th; one from Aug. 9th to 15th (CEB, MJC, PRC, JGS). Esher S.F., single birds May 30th, June 9th and 15th, and on several dates from Aug. 24th to Sept. 21st, three on June 8th and Aug. 24th, two on Sept. 13th (five observers). Hersham S.F., one or two on several dates from May 25th to June 27th (BEC, JFC, PRC, SG). Island Barn Res., one on Sept. 21st (BEC, DP), Walton G.P., one on May 26th (SKR).

159 Common Sandpiper

Frequently reported on spring and autumn passages. Breeding and winter records only are given below.

- E* Barking Power Station, single birds on Jan. 27th and Mar. 2nd (RM).
 H Old Parkbury G.P., one pair bred rearing at least two young, and another pair was present (GBDC, DJTH, BLS, EHW).
 M Queen Mary Res., one on Dec. 22nd (AQ).

161 Redshank

Breeding season, and winter records other than for the Thames marshes, are given.

- E* Fishers Green G.P., one pair, West Thurrock, three pairs (RH, JLFP).
 H Cheshunt Marsh, one on Jan. 20th (BSMS). Rye Meads S.F., three pairs, Waltham Cross S.F., one to two pairs (BSMS).
 M Enfield Lock G.P., two pairs (BSMS), Staines Moor and Stanwellmoor, three pairs (DGH, EHW).
 K Stone Marshes, four or five pairs, of which at least two pairs bred (WIB, FJH).
 S Beddington S.F., six pairs bred (BRS). Epsom S.F., two pairs (MJC). Molesey S.F., one on Feb. 11th (JGS). One by the Thames at Syon Reach on Dec. 29th (GHG). Inner London: Lambeth, one on the mud by Westminster Bridge on Dec. 30th (IRB).

162 Spotted Redshank

- E* Walthamstow Res., one on Apr. 27th (PAB, JF).
 H Rye Meads S.F., one on Apr. 5th, two on Sept. 9th (TWG).
 M Perry Oaks S.F., and Staines reservoirs, up to three on many dates from Sept. 18th to Nov. 2nd (m.o.).
 K Stone Marshes, one on Jan. 20th (WIB).

165 Greenshank

Spring passage from Apr. 7th to June 15th. Numerous on autumn passage which lasted from July 6th to Oct. 14th. The largest number was 15 at Perry Oaks S.F., Middx., on Aug. 23rd. One ringed at Perry Oaks on 8th Sept., 1957, was recovered at Fresnay-en-Retz, Loire-Atlantique, France, on Oct. 18th, 1957.

169 Knot

- M Brent Res., one on Sept. 2nd (EHW). Perry Oaks S.F., three on Nov. 24th (JWD, IGJ, HPM, BPP). Ponders End S.F., one on Sept. 27th (DK, FR). Queen Mary Res., one on Nov. 23rd and 24th (BEC, JFC).
 K Stone Marshes, two on Jan. 5th and one on the 26th (FJH).

171 Little Stint

There was an exceptional influx at the end of September when up to 40 appeared at Perry Oaks S.F., and smaller numbers elsewhere.

The largest flock previously recorded in our Area was 17.

- E* Girling Res., one on Sept. 27th (BSMS).
 H Rye Meads S.F., up to 12 from Sept. 24th to 30th (five observers).
 M Perry Oaks S.F., one on Aug. 25th and 26th, three to four on several dates from Sept. 3rd to 26th, *c.* 40 on Sept. 28th and 29th, 16 on the 30th, up to eight from Oct. 1st to 8th, one on the 10th and two on the 12th (m.o.). King George VI Res., one on May 1st (EHW); a party of 15-20 were seen late on Sept. 29th, circling very high and eventually flying off S. (JGs), probably having just left Perry Oaks; two on Oct. 1st (REE). Ponders End S.F., six from Sept. 27th to 29th, up to four from Sept. 30th to Oct. 5th (m.o.). Stanwellmoor G.P., one on Aug. 3rd (DGH).
 K Swanscombe Marshes, single birds on Aug. 24th, Sept. 14th and 18th, two on Sept. 28th and four on the 29th; 11 or 12 on Oct. 5th and 14 on the 6th, six to eight from Oct. 19th to 27th (RJF, FJH).
 S Esher S.F., one Sept. 11th to 15th (five observers). Island Barn Res., one on Sept. 17th (REE). Molesey S.F., two on Sept. 28th (BEC).

173 Temminck's Stint

- H Rye Meads S.F., single birds on Aug. 5th (JLFP), Sept. 8th (BSMS), and Sept. 27th to 29th (TWG).
 M Perry Oaks S.F., three on Sept. 21st (REG, NHP).
 Satisfactory details have been submitted in respect of the above records.

176 Pectoral Sandpiper

- H Rye Meads S.F., one on Sept. 9th (TWG). Satisfactory details submitted.

178 Dunlin

Spring passage from Mar. 10th to May 25th; autumn passage from July 6th to October, with stragglers in November and December; the maximum on passage being *c.* 40 at Rye Meads S.F., Herts, on July 26th (TWG). Flocks of up to 150 were present on the Thames marshes during the winter months.

179 Curlew Sandpiper

- E* West Thurrock, three on Sept. 15th and four on the 19th (RH).
 H Rye Meads S.F., one to two on Sept. 9th and from Sept. 28th to 30th (TWG, LL, BSMS, BN).
 M Perry Oaks S.F., one on May 25th (VAG); one to four on several dates from Sept. 3rd to Oct. 6th (m.o.). King George VI Res., two on July 31st (MEN). Ponders End S.F., one to two from Sept. 21st to 28th (six observers). Poyle G.P., one on May 26th (PRC, RHM). Stanwellmoor G.P., one on May 26th (BEC, JFC, SG).

- K Swanscombe Marshes, one on Sept. 8th, three on the 9th and 14th, and six on Oct. 6th (RJF).
 S Beddington S.F., one on Aug. 23rd (BRS).

181 Sanderling

- E* Girling Res., one on Sept. 29th (DK). Walthamstow Res., three from May 18th to 22nd (PAB, JF).
 H Rye Meads S.F., one on May 7th (BSMS).
 M. Brent Res., one on July 31st (LAB). King George VI Res., one on Apr. 24th and May 5th (JFC, SG, HPM); five on Sept. 22nd (BEC, SG, MEN, CAW). Perry Oaks S.F., six on May 9th, three on the 10th, two on the 13th and one on the 19th (five observers). Staines Res., two on May 5th (BPP).
 S Barn Elms Res., one on May 18th (JI).

184 Ruff

Wintered at Perry Oaks S.F., Middx., at least 17 at the beginning of the year, and up to 24 at the end of the year. There were also winter records from *West Thurrock Marsh, Essex, six on Jan. 7th, three on the 12th and two on the 20th, and three on Dec. 16th (MJE, RH, LW). There was evidently very little movement through the Area in spring, the maximum for Perry Oaks S.F., and the adjacent part of the Colne valley being only 23 (on Mar. 16th), most of which were probably birds which had wintered in the vicinity; elsewhere there were seven on Mar. 4th and one on the 9th at Stone Marshes, Kent, and one at *Romford S.F., Essex, on Mar. 3rd and 9th (WIB, FJH, RRS).

First arrivals in the autumn were noted on July 13th, and there were many reports of up to five birds until Oct. 5th. At Perry Oaks S.F., larger numbers were frequently seen from mid-August onwards, and the maximum, 24, was reached on Dec. 27th. It seems likely, therefore, that there was little actual passage at Perry Oaks, and that most of the arrivals remained to winter.

There was one at *Romford S.F., Essex on Nov. 16th and 17th, two at Beddington S.F. on Dec. 26th and 27th (BRS), and one, apparently injured in the leg, at Esher S.F., Surrey, on several dates in November and on Dec. 26th (BEC, JFC, SG, RRS).

187 Grey Phalarope

- H Hilfield Park Res., one on Sept. 6th and from 12th to 17th (JFCD, RAC, GBDC, BLS). Rye Meads S.F., one from Sept. 27th to 29th (TWG).
 M Queen Mary Res., one from Sept. 15th to 19th, two on the 17th (m.o.).
 S Island Barn Res., one Sept. 14th to 16th (BEC, JFC, SG).

189 Stone Curlew

- S Beddington S.F., one on Sept. 6th (JC, PJM). Tadworth, one flying over, calling, on Oct. 17th at 19.30 hrs. (HB). The observer is familiar with the call of this species. Richmond Park, one on May 26th (EDB, VFH, BAM).

193 Arctic Skua

- E Girling Res., one on Sept. 29th (DK).

199 Lesser Black-backed Gull

During the autumn passage, the numbers roosting at the *Girling Res., Essex, on Oct. 19th were estimated by JLFP at 3,300, and at Island Barn Res., Surrey, *c.* 1,000 were seen on several dates from Aug. 20th to Oct. 12th (BEC, JFC, DP).

- M Inner London: St. James's Park, an immature bird, which had evidently been present for some weeks, was seen taking fish from the Birdkeeper on May 28th and 30th at pelicans' feeding time (WGT).

202 Glaucous Gull

- M Brent Res., an adult on Jan. 12th and 20th (JI, DWT).

203 Iceland Gull

- K Blackheath, an immature with Common and Black-headed Gulls on Feb. 6th (RET, WGT). Details noted included the white primaries extending beyond the tail, rather small head, and the distal half of the bill blackish.

202/203 Glaucous/Iceland Gull

- S Lonsdale Road Res., an immature bird on Mar. 24th (RHM, DAW).

205 Mediterranean Black-headed Gull

- S Barn Elms Res., an immature on Sept. 19th and 20th (JI, HPM). It was seen in flight with immature Black-headed Gulls and one immature Common Gull, and the following details noted. About the size of Black-headed Gull; all leading primaries dark, inner primaries and secondaries whitish, thus showing noticeable contrast in wing pattern as opposed to immature Common Gull; rest of wing and upper parts ash-grey, but with a few brownish fleckings on back and mantle; rump and base of tail white, tail with dark sub-terminal band; head whitish with a dark mark behind eye; underparts white; bill, which was noticeably stouter than Black-headed and distinctly decurved, was dark at the tip and paler towards the base. There is one previous record for the London Area, an immature shot in January 1866 near Barking Creek.

207 Little Gull

- E* King George V Res., an adult on Dec. 14th (JLFP).

M King George VI Res., an immature bird on May 19th and June 9th, 16th and 30th, and an adult on June 9th (BEC, JFC, SG, CAW); an immature bird seen at Staines Res. on May 19th (AQ), and Perry Oaks S.F., on May 20th, 22nd and 25th (VAG, JS) was probably the bird seen at King George VI Res. Staines Res., an immature on Sept. 29th (PRC, REE, HPM).

208 Black-headed Gull

Three recoveries in our Area of birds ringed abroad were notified during 1957, as follows.

<i>Ringed</i>		<i>Recovered</i>
22.6.57,	Morup, Halland, Sweden, as young	c. 20.9.57, Barking, Essex, found dead under wires.
27.5.57,	Hognestad, Rogaland, Norway, as young.	27.10.57, River Thames, Battersea, found dead.
10.6.57,	Island of Rugen, Mecklenburg, Germany, as young.	24.11.57, Queen Mary Res., Middx., found dead.

There were seven recoveries of birds ringed as young in the Medway estuary, Kent. Two ringed in June, 1956, were recovered in January and March, 1957, in Middx., and five ringed in June, 1957, in July to September, 1957, three in Middx., one in Essex and one in Surrey. Owing to the growth of tall plants it was not possible to make an accurate survey of the number of nests at Perry Oaks S.F., but the numbers appear to have been well maintained.

211 Kittiwake

- E *Girling Res., an adult on Jan. 19th (JLFP). *King George V Res., an adult seen on Feb. 3rd was found shot on Feb. 24th; an immature on Nov. 9th and 24th (JLFP). Walthamstow Res., *at least three adults during the period Jan. 19th to Feb. 19th, two of which were found dead (JF, ARM, JLFP); a newly dead adult on Mar. 3rd (ARM); *an immature from Aug. 4th to 12th (JF, JLFP, FRT). *Waltham Abbey, an oiled adult on Feb. 3rd (JLFP).
- H Hilfield Park Res., an immature on Mar. 20th (JFCD, RAC). Troy Mill and West Hyde G.P.s, one on Feb. 26th and two on the 27th (BPP).
- M Brent Res., one on Jan. 1st and 27th (DWT, EHW). Southgate, an adult seen alive but unable to fly in Broomfield Park on Nov. 13th, was found dead later that day (FJL).
- S Barn Elms Res., an immature on Jan. 13th (PCB). Beddington S.F., an adult on Feb. 17th (ADB). Island Barn Res., one found dead on Mar. 3rd (DP). South Norwood lake, an immature from Feb. 15th to Mar. 3rd (DAW). Walton Res., one found dead on Feb. 17th (NJW). One flew under Hammersmith Bridge on Feb. 17th (ARM). Inner London: a dead bird floated under Hungerford Bridge on Feb. 12th (RWH).

212 Black Tern

Spring passage from May 5th to 29th, maximum 24 on May 25th at Walton Res., Surrey (BEC). Autumn passage from Aug. 4th to Nov. 12th, maximum *c.* 50 at Staines Res., Middx., on Sept. 25th (EAB).

217/218 Common/Arctic Tern

Spring passage from mid-April to June 9th; autumn passage from July 5th to Oct. 30th; one on June 30th at Staines Res. The largest flock was only 20, on Sept. 22nd at Staines Res., Middx.

222 Little Tern

E Walthamstow Res., five on Apr. 27th, two on May 25th (JF, RFS).

M Brent Res., an immature from Aug. 24th to 26th (LAB).

223 Sandwich Tern

E* Girling Res., two on May 12th (BSMS). King George V Res., one on Aug. 10th (JLFP). West Thurrock, one flying down the Thames on July 26th (RH).

M Perry Oaks S.F., one on May 10th (Js).

K Stone Marshes, parties of two, 10 and 17 on Sept. 20th (DEDC).

S Beddington S.F., two on Sept. 14th (JC, GJH). Walton G.P. and Res., one on Sept. 21st (DP, NFS).

226 Little Auk

M Staines Res., two on Nov. 9th (DGH). King George VI Res., one on Nov. 10th (BEC, JFC, MEN, SG).

230 Puffin

E *Dagenham Dock, an oiled bird caught on Nov. 12th was taken to the P.D.S.A. North Woolwich, an immature, slightly oiled, was taken to the R.S.P.C.A. on Sept. 21st and released the same day.

M Highgate, one found alive in a garden on Nov. 14th was taken to the P.D.S.A. Perry Oaks S.F., one seen in flight on Oct. 5th (PEB, PRC, SG, JGS). Queen Mary Res., an immature on Sept. 17th (REE, HPM, AQ). Inner London: one taken from the Thames at Victoria Embankment on Dec. 4th was later released; St. James's Park, an immature on the lake from Dec. 6th to 10th (JFC, RWHL, ABM, AM).

K Dartford, an adult found dead on Dec. 9th (WIB). Greenwich, an immature picked up at Blackwall Point on Sept. 14th was kept until Nov. 20th when it died (RET, WGT). Ruxley, an immature found in an orchard was moved to the G.P., Sept. 27th/28th (FJH).

232 Stock Dove

M Inner London: the Green Park, an adult and a young bird from a nest near Piccadilly on May 6th; St. James's Park, a weak young bird frequenting north bank of the lake during the summer; the first satisfactory evidence of breeding in either of these parks (DG, RWH).

Feral Pigeon

- M Inner London: Lincoln's Inn Fields, one adding twigs to an old Woodpigeon's nest in tree on July 5th, and on July 22nd, a pair displaying on and by an old Woodpigeon's nest in Leicester Square (sc). Three feeding on the platform of Trafalgar Square Underground Station, one of them also seen flying down the escalator (Report in *The Manchester Guardian* for Nov. 30th, 1957).

234 Woodpigeon

- M Inner London: South Kensington, new nest of twigs on steel scaffolding under a temporary footbridge at Natural History Museum; two young successfully reared (RWH).
- S Inner London: South Bank, one building nest behind ornamental shield of L.C.C. coat of arms high up on south face of Royal Festival Hall (RWH).

241 Barn Owl

- H Pairs nested successfully at Hoddesdon, St. Margarets and Ware (TWG).
- M Osterley Park, one pair bred, rearing at least four young (DGH, BAGH, RET, WGT).
- K Hayes, one pair probably bred (AWB).
- S Beddington S.F., two pairs breeding in the area (BRS). Dulwich Wood, a pair during June, but one later found shot (IRB).

247 Tawny Owl

- M Inner London: Bloomsbury, a pair again bred successfully in Queen Square (ADT).

248 Long-eared Owl

- H Hadley Woods, one seen on four occasions in Jan. and Feb. (GBDC).

249 Short-eared Owl

- E* King George V Res., one arrived from S. and flew off to N.E. on May 31st (JLFP).
- H Rye Meads S.F., one on Oct. 2nd (PRC).
- M Ponders End S.F., one on Sept. 3rd (DK, FR).
- S Beddington S.F. and Mitcham Common, one from Nov. 17th to 24th (m.o.).

252 Nightjar

- E* Epping Forest, the only record is of one heard at Wake Arms in late June (ETN). North Weald, Ongar Park Wood, up to three heard from June 20th to July 12th (ACW). Warley/Childerditch/Thorndon Park, two nests found, but six birds heard churring (TB, DF, GF, BPH, RRV).

- H Broxbourne, at least six pairs in woods W. of Broxbourne Bury (TWG, BN). Bricketwood, one on June 12th (EHW).
- M Enfield Chase, one flushed in Trent Park on June 15th (BSMS).
- K Bean, one on June 28th (WIB). Shoreham, one on June 26th (GMC).
- S Ashtead, single birds on May 21st and June 1st (HTMW). Banstead Heath, two, possibly three, pairs (RHBF). Esher Common, at least two pairs (BEC, JFC, JCSF, DP). Headley Heath, two pairs (WDM). Limpsfield Chart, five churring on June 7th and 8th (ADB). Oxshott, at least three pairs at Princes Coverts (PRC).

261 Hoopoe

- S Chipstead, one between Apr. 3rd and 10th (HB).

265 Wryneck

- S Chaldon, one seen in flight on June 21st (JFWB). Chipstead, one pair bred (HB, LIC, PRC, MJC). Richmond Park, two on Mar. 31st (HRW). Headley Heath, one, possibly two, heard calling on June 17th (HB).

271 Woodlark

Breeding season distribution.

- E *Epping Forest, a pair at High Beach (JLFP). *Hainault Forest, two to three pairs; a nest with chipping eggs found on Apr. 4th (MSF, APS). Havering, a pair seen at a previous breeding place, but no evidence of nesting. (MP).
- H East Barnet, one singing on May 3rd (BSMS).
- M Harefield, present in the breeding season (TLB). Hampton Court and Bushy Park, noted occasionally during the summer months (EMG, PBL).
- S Esher Common, at least one pair (MJC). Headley Heath, one pair seen feeding young (HB). Mickleham, a pair at Juniper Top on May 19th (IRB). Richmond Park, *c.* five pairs nested. Walton Heath, one pair (HB).

279 Raven

- K Orpington: one flew over the observer's garden, calling, on Jan. 6th; one flew up from a neighbouring garden, calling on Jan. 19th; two made a lightning raid over the observer's garden on Nov. 22nd; one, carrying food, flew over the observer's garden along a corvine flight-line to open country on Nov. 27th (EHG). Details noted included the characteristic call, large size compared with Carrion Crows, the wedge-shaped tail and massive bill. Only three records have been accepted for our Area in the present century, the most recent on September 19th, 1907, and the possibility that they were escaped birds could not be excluded. The same proviso must apply in the present case.

281 Hooded Crow

S Wimbledon Common, one on Feb. 3rd (CP).

283 Jackdaw

M Inner London : Kensington Gardens, a max. of eight was recorded on Mar. 14th, and only one pair is known to have bred (CHH, RWH, CHFP).

286 Jay

Numbers in the autumn were unusually high at Dulwich Woods, Surrey, where a single flock of 63 was seen on Nov. 24th (IRB). Parties of up to 32 which the observers believed to be migrants (some flying very high, others over heavily built up areas) were seen on a number of dates from Sept. 27th to Oct. 13th at several localities, mostly in the inner suburbs south of the Thames.

M Inner London: Kilburn, one seen pulling up peanuts threaded on a string on July 24th and Aug. 13th (ws); Bayswater, two seen in early morning at a bus stop in Bayswater Road, feeding on cherries dropped by the queue on the previous day (BP). Distribution in breeding season little changed, but very scarce in St. James's Park area.

S Inner London: Camberwell, two in Myatt's Fields on Mar. 14th (WGT).

Tits

Many observers reported Blue Tits in unusual numbers from mid-August until December, the movement reaching a peak in the second half of October. They were particularly noticeable in Inner London where, as in the previous smaller invasion in 1949 (see *L.B.R.* for 1949) they were seen on buildings, bombed sites, flying across busy streets, as well as in the parks and squares.

During this period, both Blue Tits and Great Tits (which were present in smaller numbers from Sept. onwards) were noted opening milk bottles, removing wall-paper and plaster, and pecking at curtains, cardboard boxes, washing and soft putty.

From the end of September until December Coal Tits and Long-tailed Tits were noted in several districts in which they are not normally seen.

In this connection, see the interim report on the 1957 irruptions of tits and other species, *B.B.*, *LI*, p. 162.

A juvenile Blue Tit ringed by RCH at Tadworth, Surrey, on August 17th, 1957, was recovered at Thame (44 miles N.W.) on October 16th, 1957.

293 Willow Tit

Breeding season distribution only is given.

B/M Denham, two to three pairs, but no proof of breeding (IGJ).

- H Maple Cross, one pair (IGJ). Watford, one pair bred (JDM).
 M Harefield, at least two pairs bred (BPP). Ruislip, two pairs (IGJ, EHW).
 S Chipstead, a pair on Apr. 20th (DAW). Epsom Common, one calling on May 23rd (DAR).

296 Nuthatch

- M/S Inner London : this species, previously recorded only six times this century, was observed in Battersea Park, Holland Park and Kensington Gardens from mid-Sept. onwards (EPB, CHH, RWH, CHFP, JP). (See also Treecreeper).
 S A distinct autumn influx was noted by IRB at Dulwich Woods.

298 Treecreeper

- M Inner London: Holland Park, one on Jan. 12th; Regent's Park, one on Feb. 4th (EPB, EMG, EHW). A number of autumn occurrences at these two localities and at Kensington Gardens, Primrose Hill and St. James's Park, appear to have been connected with the tit irruption, as do those of the Nuthatch.

307 Ring Ouzel

- M King George VI Res., a male on May 1st (EHW). Osterley Park, a male on May 9th (BAGH).
 S Beddington S.F., a female on Apr. 27th and a male on Apr. 29th (HPM, BSM).

311 Wheatear

Spring passage from Mar. 4th to June 8th; autumn passage from July 18th to Nov. 3rd.

317 Stonechat

The only summer record is of a pair at *West Thurrock, Essex, from May 19th to early July, but there was no evidence of breeding (MJE, RH, LW). At other times, up to four were seen at a number of localities, while at Perry Oaks S.F., Middx., there were 15 on Oct. 8th and 11 on the 12th (PEB, EAB).

318 Whinchat

Breeding season distribution:

- E Fishers Green, one pair (BSMS); Rainham Marsh, three pairs (RM); *Upminster, Tyler's Common, one pair (RHG).
 H Cheshunt Marsh, two pairs (BSMS); Hadley Woods, one pair (GBDC); Lea Valley to N. of Rye Meads S.F., 11 nests found during the season (TWG).
 M Enfield Lock G.P., one pair (BSMS); Mill Hill, one pair (EHW); Staines reservoirs, up to four pairs (BAGH, EHW).

- K Abbey Wood Marshes, one pair (JFB).
 S Walton G.P., one pair (JFC).

320 Redstart

Breeding season distribution:

- E *Epping Forest, between Chingford and High Beach on June 8th and 10th RJL reported four nests with young, seven family parties, one pair probably with nest or young, and a maximum of nine other males; on Apr. 24th FRT had noted four pairs and a single male from Wake Arms to High Beach. *Hainault Forest, a nest found on June 15th (CFH), and four males noted on June 23rd (FRT). Havering, a pair on June 15th (EHW). *South Weald Park, c. five pairs (CO). *Warley, a male on May 25th (RBW).
- H Broxbourne Woods, a pair on June 18th (BN). Cuffley Great Wood, at least thirteen pairs bred (BLS).
- M Trent Park, two pairs bred (BSMS).
- S Ashtead Forest, on June 10th, four nests located and two other pairs present (HTMW). Richmond Park, seven pairs present, of which three were known to have nested (EDB).

321 Black Redstart

- M Inner London: City bombed sites, recorded from Mar. 11th until Oct. 9th, with at least four cocks present on Apr. 19th. A pair bred in the Paternoster Row area and single young were also seen nearer St. Giles' Cripplegate, but the population has been seriously affected by rebuilding (ABMM, RBW *et al.*). Bloomsbury, one singing on and near Senate House in March and April, and a cock seen here on Aug. 27th; Holborn, one singing near Great Turnstile on May 24th (EHW).
- Outside the central breeding area, birds were present throughout the year at Beddington S.F., Surrey, and three pairs bred at the Croydon New Power Station adjacent to the farm (BRS).
- A female or immature was seen at Eynsford, Kent, on Mar. 10th (WIB), and another at *King George V Res., Essex, on Dec. 29th (JCE, DK).

327 Grasshopper Warbler

- E* Epping Forest, one singing at Fairmead on May 6th (JDD).
- S Ashtead, one singing on May 4th (HTMW). Banstead Common, one on May 2nd, 11th and 18th was not seen or heard again (RHBF). Beddington S.F., two Aug. 3rd to 6th (BRS). Bookham Common, at least three singing in June; a nest containing one young found on June 16th, and a family party seen on July 14th (GB, WDM, DAR, DAW). Epsom S.F., one on Aug. 19th (JGS). Oxshott, seven singing males located on July 2nd (PRC).

354 Willow Warbler

H Barnet, one singing on Mar. 4th, a very early date, was present until the end of the month, when others arrived (GBDC). One which had been ringed at Portland Bill, Dorset, on April 29th, 1957, was recovered at Goff's Oak, nr. Cheshunt, on May 2nd, 1957.

356 Chiffchaff

There were several very early records. One was singing in a garden at Ewell, Surrey, on Feb. 1st (DAR). One was seen at Finchley, Middx., on Feb. 16th (EHW). At Beddington S.F., Surrey, one was present from Feb. 17th to 24th, and two from Mar. 3rd to 10th (BRS). One was singing on Mitcham Common, Surrey, on Mar. 3rd (ADB).

At the end of the year, one was seen at Perry Oaks S.F., Middx., on Dec. 27th (JF).

357 Wood Warbler

All records of birds breeding, or singing in June and early July are given.

E *Epping Forest, one singing at High Beach in June (JLFP).

M Stanmore, three pairs present, but only one bred (EHW).

S Esher Common, a pair carrying food on July 3rd (SG). Oxshott Heath, six singing males; in two cases breeding proved (JCSF). Sheen Common, one singing on June 23rd and 29th (VFH).

365 Firecrest

K Lewisham, one in the observer's garden on Oct. 2nd (PCB). Satisfactory details have been received.

368 Pied Flycatcher

No spring records, and only six for the autumn passage.

M Mill Hill, one on Aug. 29th (EHW). Southgate, one at Grovelands Park on Sept. 19th (BSMS). Inner London: Kensington Gardens, one on Sept. 23rd (JEM); Regent's Park, one on Sept. 5th (EHW). St. James's Park, one on Sept. 26th (AM, ABMM).

S Beddington S.F., one on Sept. 1st (BRS).

379(a) Rock Pipit

All records, other than for the Thames marshes, are given.

E* Lea Valley reservoirs, one at Walthamstow on Mar. 10th (JF), and one to two on many dates from Oct. 2nd to Dec. 14th (five observers).

H Hilfield Park Res., two on Nov. 3rd (BLS). Rye Meads S.F., one on Nov. 26th (BSMS).

M King George VI Res., one on Oct. 20th and 27th (BEC, JFC, MEN). Perry Oaks S.F., one on Oct. 6th and 12th (PRC, NHP). Queen Mary Res., one on Mar. 3rd, three on Oct. 27th, one on Nov. 24th

(BEC, JFC, MEN). Staines Res., single birds on Oct. 5th and 20th and Nov. 24th (PRC, SG, KGJ, BPP).

- S Barn Elms Res., single birds on Oct. 5th, Nov. 4th and Dec. 15th (JI, NHP). Esher S.F., one on Nov. 16th; Island Barn Res., three on Nov. 16th (BEC).

379(b) Water Pipit

- M Staines Res., one on Mar. 24th (PRC).
 S Beddington S.F., one on Mar. 23rd (BSM).
 Satisfactory details have been received in respect of both records.

380(a) Pied Wagtail

A juvenile ringed at Romford, Essex, on 1st September, 1957, was recovered near Vila Real de Santo Antonio, Algarve, S. Portugal on October 28th, 1957.

- M Inner London: Regent's Park, a pair nested successfully in a stack of drain pipes (HCH, EHW).

380(b) White Wagtail

- E* Romford S.F., single birds on Mar. 10th (an early date), Apr. 19th and 21st (RRS). Walthamstow Res., a cock from Apr. 3rd to 6th (JF). West Thurrock, a cock on Apr. 8th (LW).
 H Rye Meads S.F., one on Apr. 27th (TWG).
 M Staines reservoirs, single birds on several dates from Apr. 13th to May 1st (EAB, JI, HPM, CMV).
 S Barn Elms Res., single birds on Apr. 3rd and 27th and May 13th and 18th (KVE, JI, WHT, CAWR). Beddington S.F., two Apr. 19th, one Apr. 23rd to 26th, two May 3rd and 4th (BRS). Dulwich Park, a cock on Apr. 8th (IRB). Esher Common, one at Black Pond on May 2nd roosted with Pied Wagtails (JFC).

381 Grey Wagtail

Breeding season records only are given.

- B/M A pair bred at Denham Studios (IGJ).
 H East Barnet S.F., one pair bred (ARM). Wormley, one pair probably bred at King's Weir (JLFP).
 M Harefield, one pair bred at Bell Works (TLB, EHW).
 K West Wickham, a pair present during the summer (DH).
 S Beddington S.F., one pair bred (BRS). Cobham Mill, a male on several dates in May and June (JCSF). Epsom S.F., one pair nested, unsuccessfully; Ewell, a pair nested successfully (MJC). Leatherhead, a pair on May 23rd, and one on June 23rd (IRB, HB). Worcester Park, a pair in the breeding season (CEB).

382 Yellow Wagtail

Only breeding localities not mentioned in the *L.B.Rs.* for 1955 and 1956 are given.

H Old Parkbury G.P., three pairs present of which two bred (EHW). Garston, nr. Watford, one pair bred (EHW). Bred at Rye Meads S.F., four pairs, and St. Margarets (TWG).

S Epsom Common, one pair bred (JGS).

The male which was present at the end of 1956 at Beddington S.F., Surrey (see *L.B.R.* 21, p. 35) remained through the winter and was last definitely recorded on Mar. 22nd, the first passage birds being present on the 24th. This is the first occasion on record on which this species has remained throughout the winter in Britain. (BSM *et al.*—see *B.B., L.*, p. 353).

At Beddington S.F., eight breeding males had the characteristics of Sykes's Wagtail and there were numerous records in April and May of birds resembling both the typical Blue-headed Wagtail and variants. Variants were also seen at Epsom S.F. and Walton G.P., Surrey and at King George VI Res., Middx. (JFC, MJC, EHW).

383 Waxwing

H Barnet, two on Nov. 12th and one on the 13th (PHW, RGW). Hertford, six on Nov. 24th, two on the 30th, and at least 11 on Dec. 22nd (TWG).

K Kelsey Park, one on Nov. 9th (JP, MW). Barnehurst, two on Dec. 2nd, one on the 3rd and five on the 5th; Bexley Heath, three on Dec. 22nd (WIB).

S Esher Common, six on Mar. 3rd, 19 on the 10th and 13th (JCSF, DP, JT). New Malden, six on Mar. 31st (REG).

384 Great Grey Shrike

M Ruislip, one on Dec. 22nd (TLB).

S Addington, single birds on Apr. 3rd and Dec. 26th (ADB). Mitcham Common, one on Apr. 18th (MJC).

385 Lesser Grey Shrike

M One near Perry Oaks S.F. on Oct. 6th was seen by several observers, including REE and HPM who provided the following summary of points noted: forehead, crown, nape and rest of upper-parts grey tinged brown, feathers of scapulars and a little of lower mantle with faint white edges, rump grey, noticeably paler than rest of upper-parts; lores, under and through eye, ear-coverts and fore-part of crown black, no white above eye; cheeks white, contrasting with dull white of the rest of the under-parts and a cream tinge to breast, flanks and under tail coverts with some darker fleckings; tail blackish with prominent white outer feathers, not graduated as in Great Grey Shrike; wings black-brown with narrow buff margins and tips

to coverts, buff edges to secondaries and tip of primaries, and a white patch at the base of the primaries forming a "square" on the closed wing and very prominent in flight; bill blackish, paler at base; legs dark brown; resembled a Great Grey Shrike, but was smaller, more compact, and shorter tailed in appearance.

A grey shrike seen in the same area on Oct. 4th and again on the 7th was probably the same bird, but confirmation is lacking.

388 Red-backed Shrike

Breeding season distribution:

- E* Epping Forest, two pairs, one nest found (JF, RJL). Shenfield/Brentwood, two pairs (DF, GF, BPH, MAO).
- H Barnet, a pair built a nest, but did not lay (GBDC). East Barnet S.F., one pair bred successfully (ARM).
- M Grange Park, one pair: Southgate, one pair (BSMS). Trent Park, one pair bred successfully (RFP). Ruislip, at least three pairs, but only one known to have reared young (NHP).
- S Chipstead, at least two pairs (MJC, HB). Coulsdon, at least two pairs (five observers). Ewell, two pairs (MJC, AQ). Ham Common, one pair bred (FRM). Headley Heath, a male on June 23rd (IRB).

391 Hawfinch

Breeding season distribution:

- E* South Weald Park, a pair building on May 12th (RM).
- H Broxbourne Woods, c. 6 on June 10th (BN). Hadley Woods, one pair bred successfully (GBDC).
- M Hampstead, present from Feb. to July and bred (GT). Ruislip, a pair in Copse Wood on Apr. 28th (IGJ). Stanmore Common, one pair resident but no proof of breeding (EHW).
- K Bean, present on June 28th (WIB).
- S Chipstead, an adult and an immature on June 22nd (JI). Littleworth Common, a pair on Apr. 14th (MJC).

393 Goldfinch

A juvenile ringed at Beddington, Surrey, on August 25th, 1957, was recovered at Obourg, nr. Mons, Hainaut, Belgium, in mid-October, 1957.

- M Inner London: Regent's Park, at least one pair reared young (MC, HCH, EHW).

394 Siskin

Recorded up to Apr. 28th and from October 7th. The larger parties, and a September record, are given below.

- E* South Weald Park, 35+ on Oct. 7th (BH).
- H Watford, c. 75 in Cassiobury Park during first two weeks of January (JDM).

- M Harefield, *c.* 30 at the Savehay G.P. on Dec. 27th (IGJ). Perry Oaks S.F., two immatures on Sept. 15th (WHD).
 S Esher, *c.* 40 at Royal Mills on Dec. 26th (BEC).

397 Redpoll

Breeding season and Inner London records only are given.

- E* Shenfield, a pair on May 4th, 11th and 29th (APSI).
 M Enfield, a family party on July 26th (BSMS). Golders Green, young birds being fed at end of June; probably breed in grounds of the crematorium (DWT). Hampstead, several pairs bred (GT). Stanmore, two pairs present to end of June, but no proof of breeding (EHW). Trent Park, *c.* three pairs (BSMS). Inner London: Victoria Park, four on Mar. 15th (WHD).
 K Orpington, two pairs in breeding season (EHG).
 S Present in breeding season at Banstead Heath, four pairs. Headley Heath, one pair, Tadworth, three pairs, and Walton Heath, four pairs; breeding proved at Banstead and Walton Heaths (HB). Cheam, one pair bred (RET, WGT). Cobham, pairs seen on several dates in summer (JCSF).

404 Crossbill

- B/M Up to six seen in Denham area from Jan. 6th to 20th (m.o.).
 S Chessington Zoo, one flying over, calling, on Apr. 17th (JFC). Esher Common/Oxshott Heath, up to 25 seen from Mar. 14th to Apr. 13th (m.o.). Kingswood Warren, two on Apr. 7th (HB). Limpsfield, present over a period of two months in spring (PB). Richmond Park, six on Apr. 5th and one on the 6th (BEC).

407 Chaffinch

Three recoveries abroad of birds ringed in our Area were notified during the year.

<i>Ringed</i>	<i>Recovered</i>
12.2.55, S. Weald, Essex, adult male.	14.11.57, Hoevenen, Antwerp, Belgium.
5.2.56, Romford, Essex, female.	10.6.57, Randsverk, Opland, S. Norway.
20.3.55, Chessington, Surrey, adult male.	14.9.55, Norheimsund, Hordaland, S. Norway.

- M Inner London: the Green Park, one feeding from a lady's hand in March (RFS).

408 Brambling

Present up to Apr. 20th and from Oct. 6th, but rather scarce except in Surrey, where larger numbers appeared at the end of the winter, as follows:

- S Caterham/Whyteleafe, two flocks of *c.* 150 and several smaller flocks in February and March (VAG). Croydon, 184 counted in the Whitgift School grounds on Mar. 15th and 16th (ADB). Epsom Downs, *c.* 400 on Mar. 16th and 17th (BEC, JGS).

409 Yellowhammer

- M Inner London: Regent's Park, a female on Jan. 23rd (EHW).

410 Corn Bunting

Only localities in which present in the breeding season, and which were not mentioned in the *L.B.R.s* for 1955 and 1956, are given below.

- E* One near Barking Power Station on June 17th (RM).
 H Broxbourne, one on July 19th (BN). Cheshunt G.P., a pair on June 2nd (BSMS). West Hyde, one singing in breeding season (NHP).
 M Osterley Park, one singing on a number of dates (BAGH).

415 Cirl Bunting

- S Betchworth, one singing on Oct. 4th (HB).

422 Lapland Bunting

- S One at Wimbledon Common on Nov. 3rd (NJPW). It was seen in flight and feeding on the ground at ranges down to five yards. The following details are extracted from the notes submitted.

Round, dumpy body, close to the ground; distinctly short brown tail, heavily marked black with no white visible (but in flight there were distinct white outer tail feathers): mantle and back brown, heavily marked darker brown and black; faint wing-bar formed by whitish tips to wing-coverts; slight streaking on flanks; marked buff stripe behind eye above faint brown triangular patch from ear covert to base of bill; heavy red-brown streaks down the head leaving a pale streak each side of the crown, chin with thin brown flecks on yellowish-white; a distinct "necklace" formed by the edge of black-brown streaks on the throat and upper breast, the streaking ending in pale rufous-buff on the chest which shortly merged into grey-white belly and under-parts; the shortish angled bill was pale horn with a small black tip, and the legs red-brown; the observer's wife noted that there was a russet-brown patch at the back of the head. The bird did not call.

423 Snow Bunting

- E* King George V Res., one on Nov. 9th and 10th (DK, BSMS, JLFP, FR).
 H Hilfield Park Res., a male on Feb. 3rd (MDK).
 M Queen Mary Res., one on Nov. 17th (PRC). Perry Oaks S.F., a male on Nov. 23rd (JI).

424 House Sparrow

E* One at Walthamstow Res. on Mar. 30th was entirely slate-grey (JF).

425 Tree Sparrow

Only breeding season records for localities not mentioned in the *L.B.Rs.* for 1955 and 1956 are given below.

E Hainault Lodge, *c.* five pairs bred (ACP, DJS).

H Bred at Broxbourne, Hoddesdon and Cheshunt (BSMS).

M Cranford Park, two pairs bred (BWC). Osterley Park, at least 10 pairs bred (BAGH).

S Cobham, 8 + 2 in colony near River Mole on Apr. 19th (PADH). Esher S.F., six pairs bred (BEC)., Hershams S.F., three pairs in breeding season (JFC).

Additions to London Bird Reports for previous years**4 Red-throated Diver**

S Herne Hill, one found alive in a garden on Feb. 5th, 1956, was taken to the R.S.P.C.A., but died the following day.

99 Marsh Harrier

M East Bedfont, one on May 14th, 1951 (WHD).

107 Merlin

M Hampstead Heath, a male on Feb. 3rd, 1955 (VRG).

161 Redshank

K Abbey Wood Marshes, a pair during the breeding season of 1956 (JFB).

162 Spotted Redshank

S Two at Godstone Bay Pond from Aug. 23rd to 26th, 1955 (BH).

207 Little Gull

M Southgate, an immature at Grovelands Park on Dec. 27th, 1956 (BSMS).

252 Nightjar

M At least two pairs at Trent Park in June and July, 1956 (BSMS).

318 Whinchat

K Present in the breeding season of 1956 at Abbey Wood Marshes, a pair and a singing male, and Plumstead Marshes, a singing male (JFB).

A Ten-year Review of Duck Counts in the London Area

BY R. C. HOMES

Summary

1. The scope of the counts and their statistical treatment are described.
2. The winter population of mallard, teal, widgeon, pochard and tufted duck showed a substantial increase in the second half of the period. Other species increased slightly or maintained their numbers. There was not an unusual number of hard winters during the period.
3. The figures for the various species are set out and commented on briefly.

Introduction

The monthly winter counts of wildfowl that have been made in the British Isles since early 1948 were organized at first by the Wildfowl Inquiry Committee of the British Section of the International Committee for Bird Preservation and subsequently by the Wildfowl Trust. The London Natural History Society had already organized its own counts in the winter of 1938-39 and had resumed them in the early winter of 1947-48. When the national counts were started the London ones were merged with them, and the object of this paper is to review the results for the London Area (within 20 miles of St. Paul's Cathedral) in the first ten winters—from 1947-48 to 1956-57.

Three interim reports have been published (Homes, 1949, 1952 and 1953) giving a brief account of the more interesting results, and as the word "census" has appeared in two of the titles it should be made clear that the counts do not represent a *complete* census of ducks in the London Area. For purpose of comparison the same waters have been selected on each occasion, and while these include all the more important localities for ducks, there is no suggestion that the list is complete. Many mallard, a fair number of teal, tufted duck and pochard and very small numbers of other species are found on waters not included. It is thought, however, that normally the waters counted carry a sufficiently high proportion of all the species concerned for the results to give a true indication of the trend of the winter duck population of the Area. A list of the waters will be found on page 45 of *The Birds of the London Area since 1900*.

There have been four interim reports of the progress of the national counts, and in one of these (*National Wildlife Counts, 1952-1954*) Atkinson-Willes discusses the reliability of the counts and possible errors of analysis and interpretation. It does not seem necessary to cover the same ground here, but as the national coverage has varied greatly over the years it can usefully be stressed that the London counts deal with the same series of waters throughout, except for the addition of the King George VI reservoir

which was finally filled in the spring of 1950 and the William Girling reservoir which was completed in 1951 and has since been included in the counts. As it is situated between the older Walthamstow and King George V reservoirs movements between the three groups might have seriously affected the results.

For various reasons there are times when a count has been missed on one of the waters. When the water is one on which the population of a particular species is small and stable, a direct interpolation has been made between the number on the preceding and succeeding dates. However, this is not often possible. If we call the date on which a count was missed "a," the usual method of interpolation has been to compare the totals for all waters counted on date "a" with the total for the same waters on either the preceding or succeeding date, whichever was most appropriate according to the stage of the winter. Assuming the percentage rise or fall on date "a" to be "b," then the figure to be interpolated is obtained by multiplying by "b" the number of ducks on the preceding or succeeding date for the waters omitted. Counts made within one day of the correct date have, however, been accepted unless there is reason to suppose that they are misleading. Where the figure interpolated plus the total of counts made more than one day either side of the correct date comes to more than about 10 per cent of the total for the date concerned, use of the total is considered unjustifiable and the count is omitted entirely in the tables.

The figures in brackets represent the percentage of the total to the nearest one per cent arrived at by interpolation or by the inclusion of counts made within one or two days of the correct date. If this percentage is two or less to the nearest one per cent, it is considered too small to affect the results for comparative purposes and has not been shown. In a few cases where the total is still believed to be acceptable although not complying with the standards laid down a footnote has been added.

It is obviously impossible to publish in detail the results of nine to ten counts a season for ten winters for well over 30 waters or groups of waters and covering ten species of ducks which are regular in winter in the London Area. In many years the coverage has been patchy outside the months of October to March inclusive, and the scope of this paper has therefore been restricted to the totals for those months, except for the inclusion of April counts for the tufted duck. For the principal species a table is given setting out the year and month for all counts where the interpolation is not excessive as already defined—in fact, the number of occasions included when it is over 10 per cent are very few indeed. For the four commonest species—the mallard, teal, pochard and tufted duck—there are also figures showing the average for the period for each of the six months and an average for each winter in which the data are adequate. For the less numerous species this information is included in the tables. The winter average has been calculated whenever at least three valid counts have fallen within a specified mid-winter period when numbers are judged to be least influenced by normal autumn and spring passage. It is impossible to exclude the effect of hard-weather movements which naturally occur from

time to time and are part of the normal course of events in any series of winters. In a period of ten years their effect should average out unless they have been unusually frequent, and this has not been so.

Discussion

Since the tables and figures should speak for themselves, the results will not be discussed in great detail. It is important, however, to consider what was happening before the ten-year period began. In 1946-47, the winter immediately preceding the series, there was an exceptionally prolonged spell of severe frost and a high degree of mortality of many passerine birds. While in the London Area ducks are not shot heavily and hence escape the heavy losses that they suffer on the Continent at such times, the effect of the spring migration on birds weakened by continuous frost may well be considerable. Unfortunately, in the first few winters of our series many counts were missed, and for mallard especially, which are usually present on all the waters included in the sample, the gaps were too great to justify interpolation. The immediate effect of the winter of 1946-47 cannot therefore be assessed, but the numbers of several species, notably teal and tufted duck, were (? still) at a very low level in the winter of 1950-51. Mallard, on the other hand, were more scarce in the winter of 1952-53 though the information is inadequate for the three winters before 1950-51 and in 1951-52. The most significant fact that has emerged from the effort of maintaining a survey of this nature for ten years is that there has been a very definite tendency for the winter duck population of the Area to increase considerably in the latter part of the period. Mallard, for example, increased over the previous winter average by about 20 per cent in 1953-54, about 13 per cent in 1954-55 and by about 8 per cent in 1955-56 and 1956-57. The average for teal rose very slightly in four of the five winters from 1952-53 and substantially in the winter of 1954-55. Wigeon had a steep rise in 1954-55 compared with two years before, and maintained the new level with further slight rises in the two following winters. The numbers of pochard and tufted duck have increased even more remarkably. Goosander numbers have been less consistent, but overall they were higher in the last three years than in the earlier ones. The numbers of gadwall, shoveler, goldeneye and smew are smaller and a longer period is required for an analysis of the trend, but there is certainly no suggestion of any decrease of significance.

The increase of ducks in general in the Area can be demonstrated most clearly by adding the winter averages for the seven species where these have been calculated. It must be emphasized, however, that these figures have no absolute value and are intended purely for comparative purposes. Thus in the four winters for which it has been possible to calculate such averages for all the seven species, the total of mallard, teal, wigeon, shoveler, tufted duck, pochard and goosander have been as follows :—

1952-53	...	7,361
1954-55	...	9,853
1955-56	...	11,760
1956-57	...	11,861

Moreover, in February, 1956, when there was the biggest influx of ducks to the Area on record (Homes, 1957), there were 14,230 on the 12th and at one time there must have been about 15,000 on the principal waters alone. There can be no question that so far as the London Area is concerned the winter population of ducks on the mainly artificial environment of reservoirs and gravel pits is extremely satisfactory. In the reservoirs, of course, the birds enjoy virtually complete protection. It does not follow that the increase necessarily reflects in any way the general population trend of these species as a whole and it could merely indicate a gradual shift of part of the European population. Whether or not this is so is for the international organization of the wildfowl counts to show, but great credit is due to the members of this Society whose perseverance over so many years has made possible this appraisal of the situation in our own Area. It is to be hoped that the outcome will be of sufficient interest to encourage them to maintain the effort.

The results for individual species are given below, the figures in brackets being percentages as defined on page 37.

Mallard

TABLE 1.

	<i>Oct.</i>	<i>Nov.</i>	<i>Dec.</i>	<i>Jan.</i>	<i>Feb.</i>	<i>Mar.</i>
Winter						
1948-49	3237(5) 2424	—	—	—	—	2029(5)
1950-51	3580	4417 ^a	—	4108	—	2754
1951-52	—	—	—	5274 ^b	3357	1885(3)
1952-53	—	3139(7)	3507	3714	3398	2565
1953-54	3126(3)	3596(11)	3860	—	4866(5)	3175
1954-55	—	4115 ^c	4837 ^d (4)	4999	—	2429
1955-56	—	4779 ^c	—	4802 ^f	5454 ^g (6)	3993
1956-57	—	6052 ^h	6073(3) 5132 ^j	4496 ⁱ	—	—

NOTES.

- (a) includes 1,600 birds reported as approximate totals ;
- (b) includes William Girling Res. for first time—30 birds only ;
- (c) does not include two waters unlikely to add more than 2-3% ;
- (d) does not include two waters unlikely to add more than 2-3% ;
- (e) includes 546 counted one day early and 77 one week late ;
- (f) includes 487 counted one day late and 80 one week early ;
- (g) includes 682 counted two days late ;
- (h) includes 509 counted one day early ;
- (i) includes 543 counted three days late ;
- (j) includes 89 counted one to two days from correct date, 680 three days late and 81 one week late.

The counts detailed in table 1 are shown as monthly averages in figure 1 and as winter averages (for period Nov. 1–Feb. 15) in figure 2. These dates have been selected as defining a period when numbers are relatively stable apart from exceptional hard weather movements. In

MALLARD

FIGURE 1.

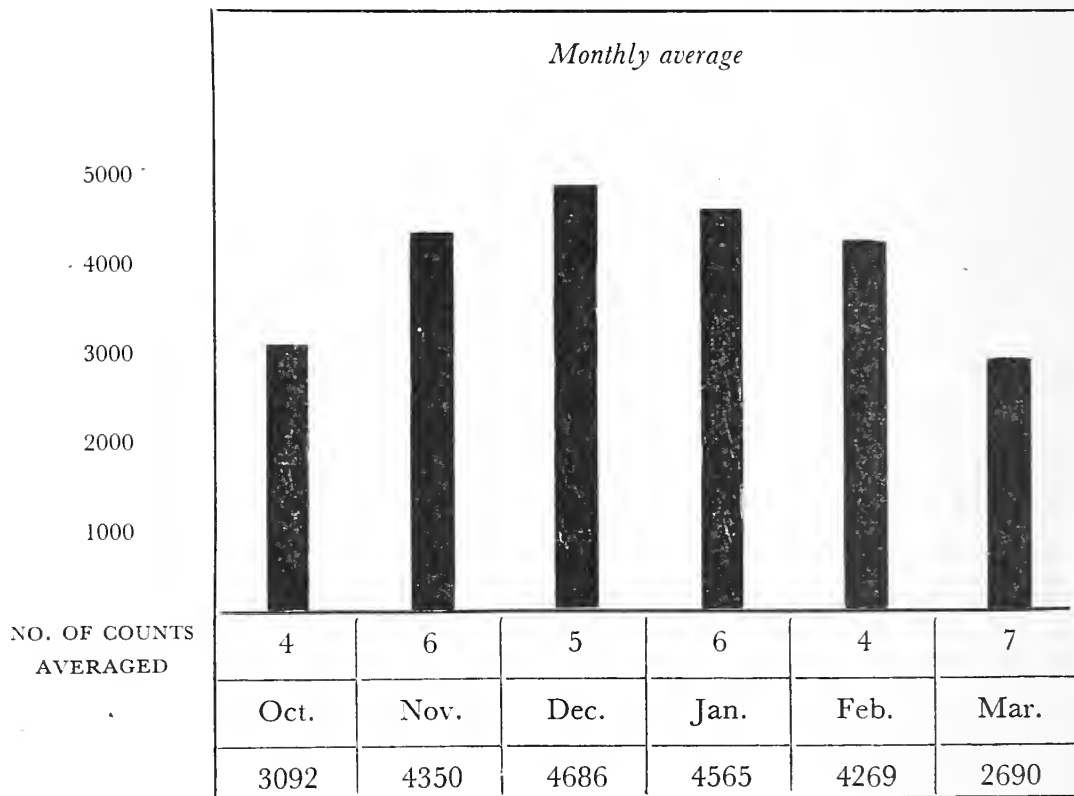
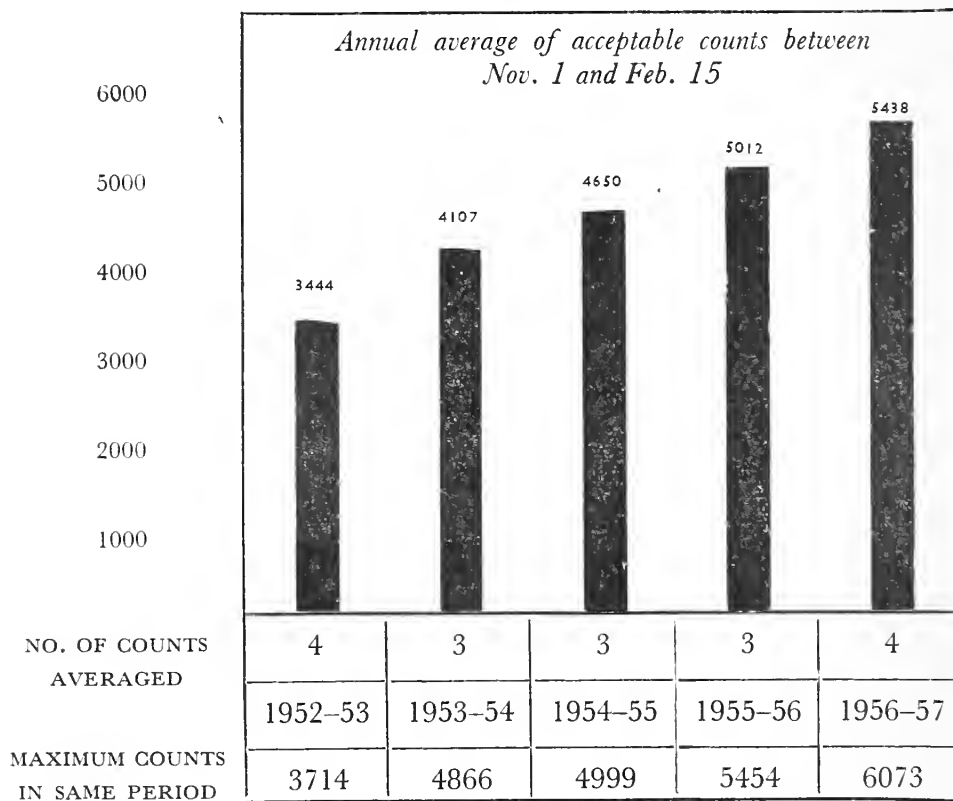


FIGURE 2.



the four winters from 1953-54 to 1956-57 there has been a rise in the average number of mallard in the Area amounting to about 20, 13, 8 and 8 per cent respectively, in each case compared with the figure for the previous winter.

Teal

TABLE 2.

	<i>Oct.</i>	<i>Nov.</i>	<i>Dec.</i>	<i>Jan.</i>	<i>Feb.</i>	<i>Mar.</i>
Winter						
1948-49	86 218	—	—	—	—	—
1950-51	120	150	288(12)	307	—	363 ^a
1951-52	—	—	—	575	663	350
1952-53	—	276 ^b	510	470	421	169
1953-54	110 ^c	352 ^c	443 ^c	—	610 ^d	745 ^c
1954-55	—	682	710 ^c	866 ^c	848	536 ^c
1955-56	142 + ^c	458 ^c	644(3)	1252	987	731(9)
1956-57	—	632(3)	769	—	—	—
	—	—	1168	811	—	222

NOTES.

- (a) includes 20 counted one day early ;
 (b) does not include King George V Res. ;
 (c) does not include William Girling Res. ;
 (d) does not include William Girling Res and Staines Res. ;
 (e) includes 94 counted one day late, 420 two days late and 10 a week late ;
 (f) includes 358 counted three days late.

It is more difficult to obtain a good idea of the number of teal in a district than of any other duck, as they have a marked liking for cover and a high proportion of the total population is probably to be found along rivers and at gravel pits and sewage farms where accurate counting is often impossible. In the London Area, however, considerable flocks spend the winter days at the King George VI and Island Barn reservoirs, with smaller flocks in the Lea valley, and it is mainly with the teal at these daytime resorts that our counts are concerned.

In each of the winters from 1952-53 there has been an increase on the average for the previous year for which adequate data are available, the steepest rise being in 1954-55 when the average was 776 compared with 468. The highest monthly count was on January 15th, 1956, when there were 1,252 compared with a previous maximum of 866 at about the same time in the previous winter, but the average for that winter only shows a slight rise as numbers were very low on the November count.

Gadwall

The largest monthly count of gadwall in the ten winters under review was 29. Practically all the gadwall in the Area are found at Barn Elms and on the adjacent stretches of the Thames where they may easily be missed so that variations in such small figures are only to be expected. With this in mind there is no suggestion of any important change in numbers.

TEAL

FIGURE 3.

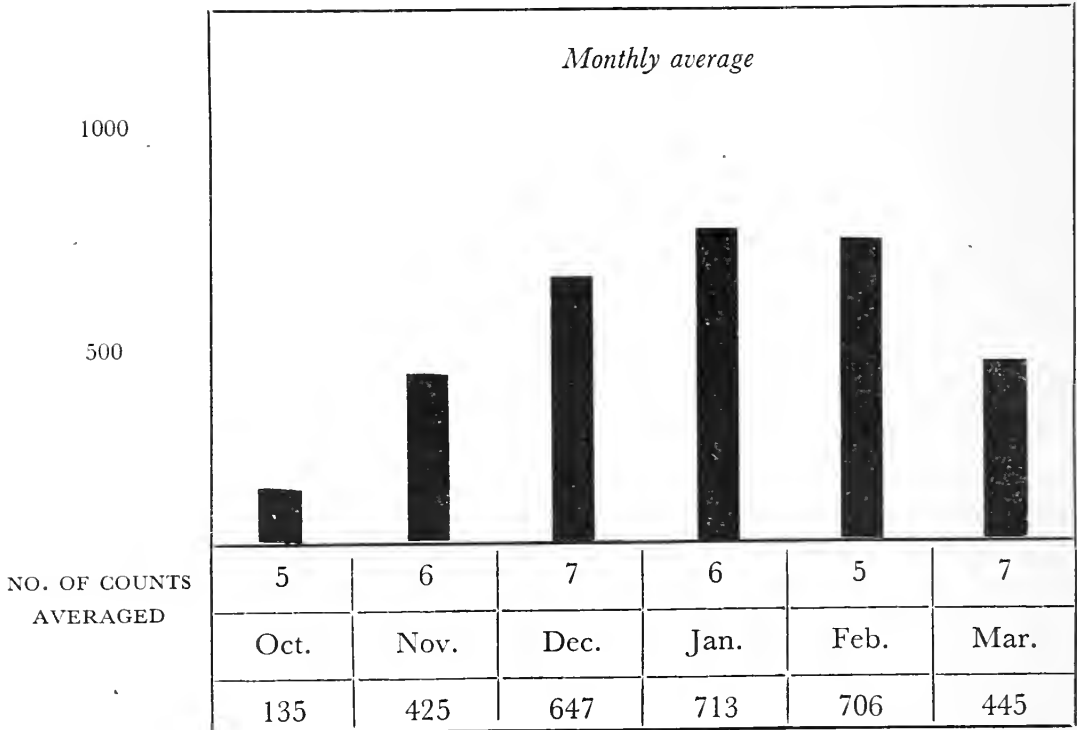
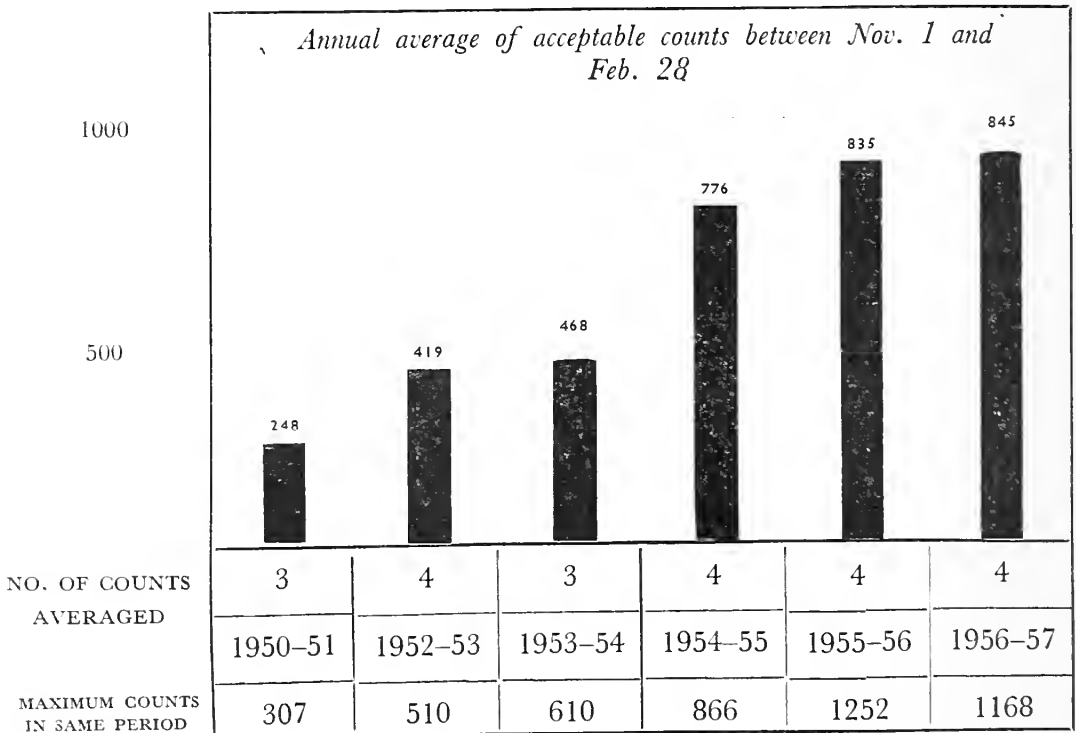


FIGURE 4.



Wigeon

TABLE 3.

*Average for
period
Nov. 1-*

	<i>Oct.</i>	<i>Nov.</i>	<i>Dec.</i>	<i>Jan.</i>	<i>Feb.</i>	<i>Mar.</i>	<i>Feb. 28</i>
Winter							
1947-48	—	—	190	353	110	297 ^a	218
1948-49	78	337	—	290 ^b	—	181	—
1949-50	—	—	—	95	109	157 ^c	—
1950-51	12	85	—	420	—	237	—
1951-52	—	—	286	121	169	123	192
1952-53	—	140	85	—	165	201	130
1953-54	16	20	93	—	—	—	—
1954-55	—	—	205	413(12)	320 +	408	313
1955-56	—	147	275	—	603 +	397 +	342
1956-57	—	137 +	214	495	501	—	438
			443				
Monthly average	—	137	244	260	314	269	

NOTES.

(a) Lea valley excluded.

(b) 255 were counted on one date and 35 on the previous day.

(c) includes 77 counted one day early.

Annual averages for the period November 1st-February 28th have been calculated where there are at least three acceptable counts in that period. The population of wigeon is much more variable than that of the commoner species, and flocks are normally only found on the larger and deeper reservoirs, except for one of a hundred or so which occurs annually at the Chelsea, Lambeth and Walton reservoirs (Molesey group). In common with other ducks, wigeon were more numerous in the last few winters than in the earlier part of the period.

Shoveler

TABLE 4.

*Average for
period
Nov. 1-*

	<i>Oct.</i>	<i>Nov.</i>	<i>Dec.</i>	<i>Jan.</i>	<i>Feb.</i>	<i>Mar.</i>	<i>Feb. 28</i>
Winter							
1947-48	—	104	42	102	78	24 +	81
1948-49	146	—	—	—	—	187	—
	107					156	
1949-50	—	—	—	100	22	35	—
1950-51	66	71	47	36	—	77	51
1951-52	—	—	69	64	82	57	72
1952-53	—	46	34	48	23	20	38
1953-54	89	75	96	—	40	27	70
1954-55	—	30	63	34	56 +	72	46
1955-56	—	159	—	32	86 +	59	92
1956-57	—	138	52	57	23	93	67
Monthly average	102	89	58	59	51	73	

At one time shoveler were almost exclusively passage migrants in the Area, and the habit of wintering in any numbers dates only from the forties. In more recent years the departure of many of the birds in late

LONDON BIRD REPORT

TUFTED DUCK

FIGURE 5.

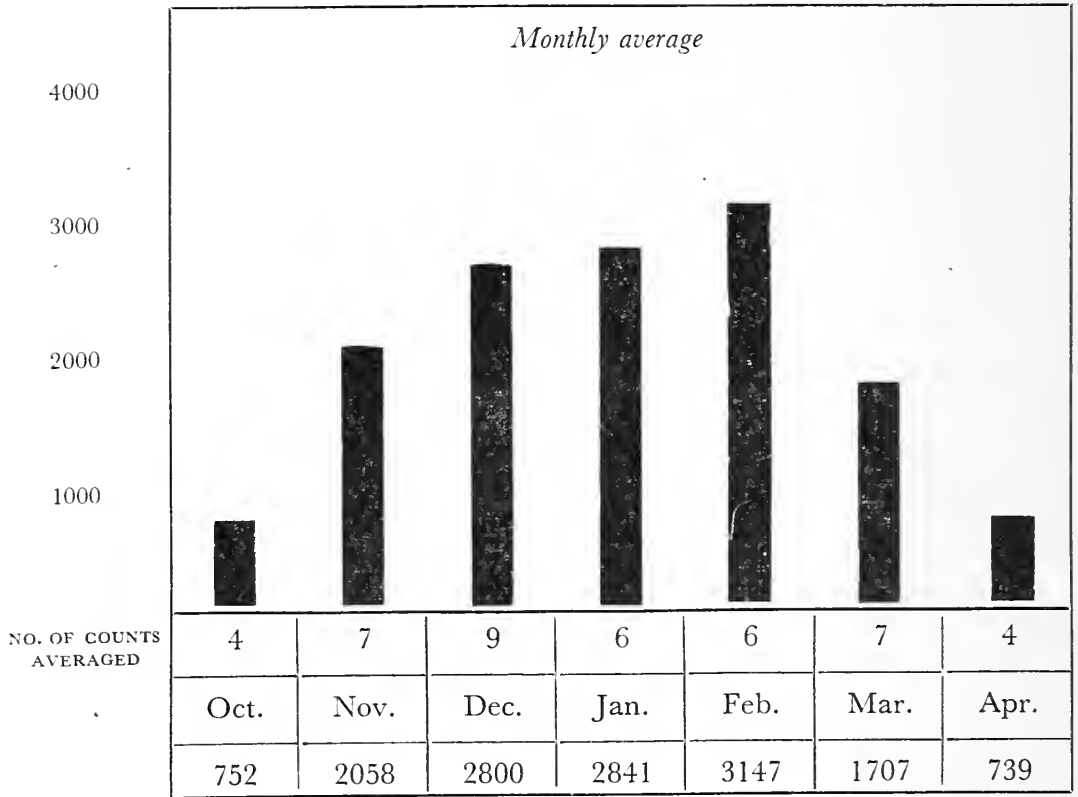
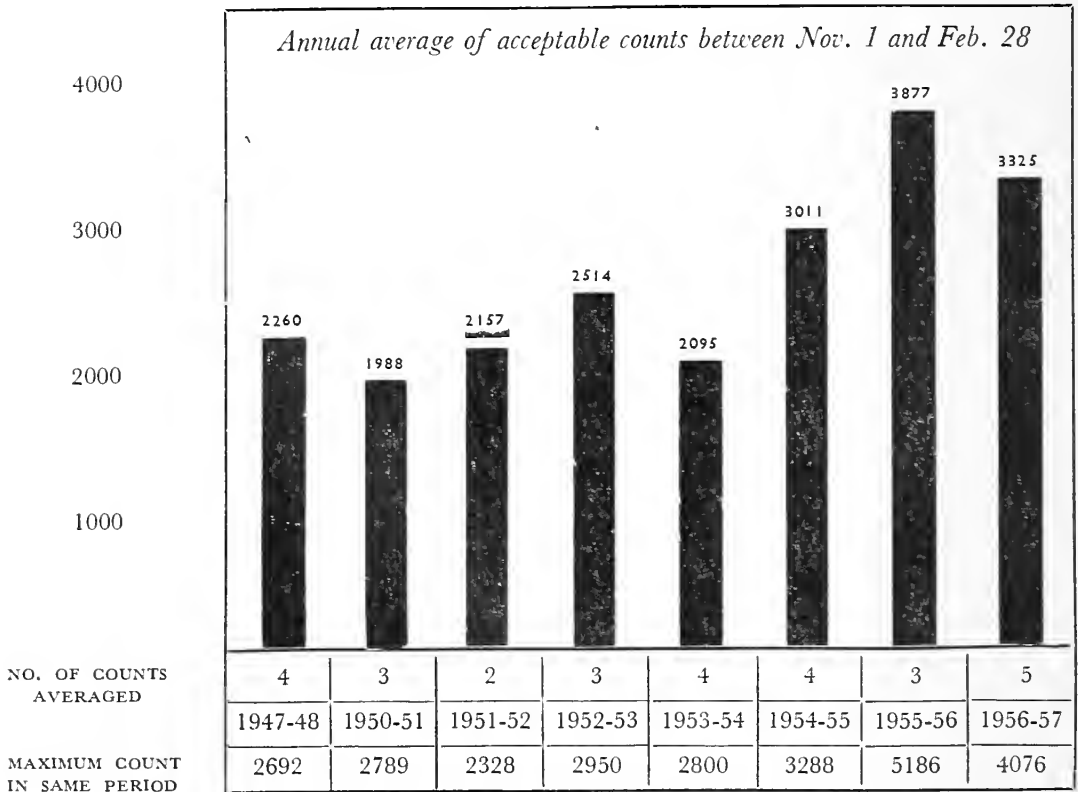


FIGURE 6.



NOTE : There was no full count in February, 1951.

autumn or early winter has not been followed by fresh arrivals. It may be significant that a decline in the number of *breeding* shoveler also has been noticed in other parts of the country.

Tufted Duck

TABLE 5.

	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.
Winter	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1947-48	—	1640 +	2692 +	2407 +	2300	—	—
1948-49	734 +	—	—	—	—	1472 +	—
	1207						
1950-51	362	1231	1944 +	2789	—	1881	827
1951-52	—	—	1986	2328	—	882	313(5)
1952-53	—	2012 +	2580	—	2950	1357	617(7)
1953-54	705	1490 + (9)	1539 +	2550 + (3)	2800 + (9)	—	—
1954-55	—	2478 +	3288 +	3020 +	3260 ^a + (7)	2242	—
1955-56	—	2955 +	3489(4)	—	5186(6)	3133	1199 ^b
1956-57	—	2599(9)	4076	3954 ^c	2384(5)	984(5)	—
			3610				

NOTES.

- (a) includes 296 counted two days early ;
 (b) includes 227 counted three days late ;
 (c) includes 206 counted three days late.

Although the annual average number of tufted duck had a slight setback in the winter of 1953-54, a tendency to a steady increase is apparent from figure 6 if the abnormal conditions of February, 1956, are excluded. Whereas the exceptional numbers of pochard that visited the London Area in that month were not present on the date of the monthly count, the corresponding influx of tufted ducks was reflected in the total of 5,186 on February 12th (cf. Homes, 1957). If the count on that date were to be omitted from the calculation of the winter average, the revised figure for 1955-56 would be 3,192 instead of 3,877 and would approximately conform to the rate of increase recorded in other winters of the period.

Pochard

TABLE 6.

	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.
Winter	—	—	—	—	—	—
1947-48	—	984 +	2001 +	2689	1619	—
1948-49	214	—	—	1135 + (4)	—	—
	572					
1950-51	164	1244	—	1532	—	235
1951-52	309(3)	—	500(3)	979	478(9)	90
			537			
1952-53	—	—	553(3)	786	483	112
1953-54	67 +	141 +	1078 +	—	—	402
1954-55	—	503 +	1019 +	1140 + ^a	669 +	326 +
1955-56	—	1313 +	1298 +	1142 ^b	1284 +	486 +
1956-57	—	1343	1145	1966	569(5)	65
			1651			

NOTES.

- (a) includes 161 counted one day late ;
 (b) includes 175 counted one week early.

POCHARD

FIGURE 7.

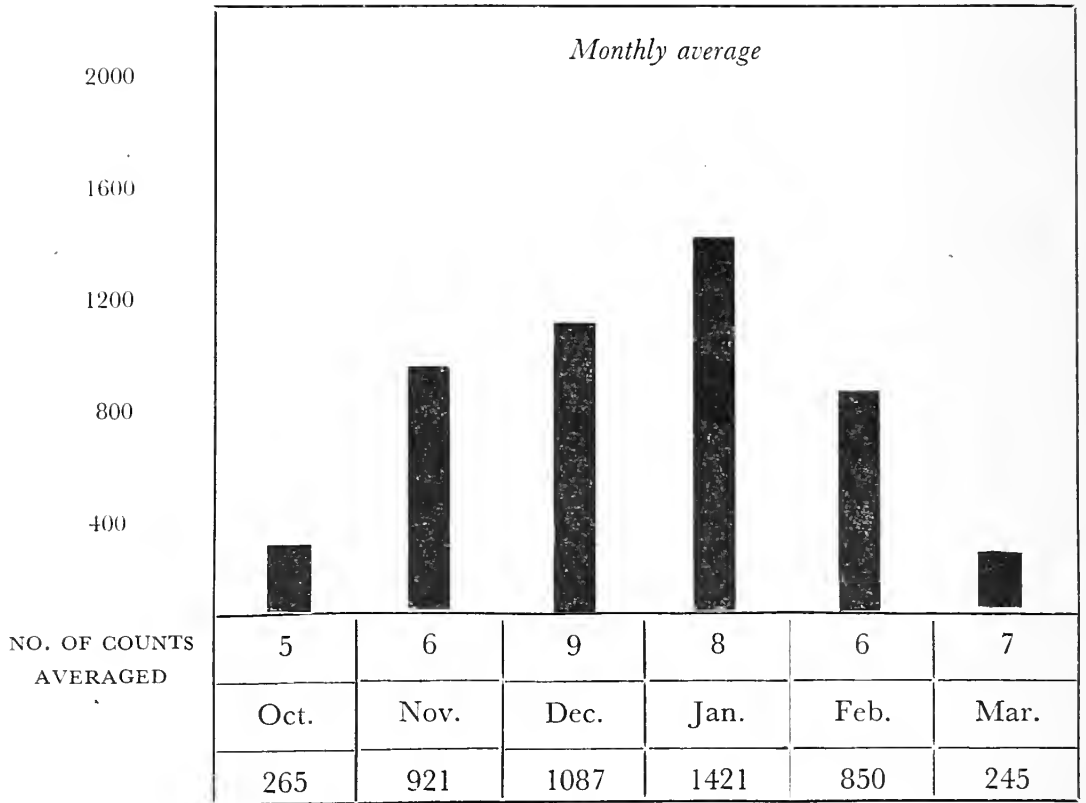
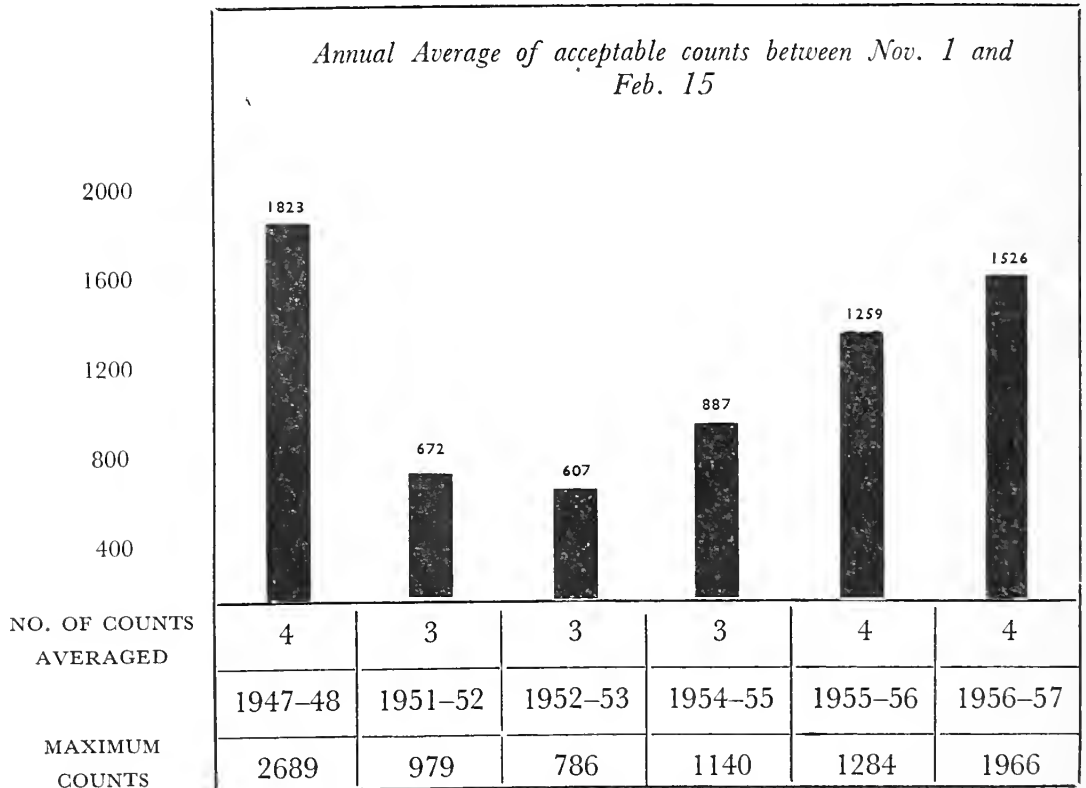


FIGURE 8.



The phenomenally high numbers in the winter of 1947-48 were peculiar to this species, and all other species of ducks were at quite a normal level of population for the London Area at that period. The remaining results show the same pattern of annual increase in recent years as the mallard and teal, but in the winter of 1955-56 very high numbers were present for short periods between duck counts. There were nearly 2,500 on February 5th, 1956, at the principal waters only, and in the region of 3,000 three weeks later. In the intervening period numbers had reverted to little above the normal average for the time of year. The cause of the greater numbers, which were higher than any previously recorded, was associated with hard weather movements from the Continent (Homes, 1957), but it is worth noting that the large flocks of 1947-48 occurred in a period of comparatively mild weather.

Goldeneye

The numbers of goldeneye in the Area are too small to justify tabulation. Maximum counts in the ten winters concerned have ranged from 18 (no complete count in February in that winter) to 64 in February, 1956, when the numbers of many species of ducks were abnormally high. If these two extremes are omitted, the average of the maximum counts in the six remaining winters for which at least two complete counts are available in the first three months of the year is 46, and there is no evidence of any trend to increase or decrease in the size of the winter population.

Goosander

TABLE 7.

Winter	<i>Average for period</i>					
	<i>Nov.</i>	<i>Dec.</i>	<i>Jan.</i>	<i>Feb.</i>	<i>Mar.</i>	<i>Dec. 14– Mar. 31</i>
1947-48	6	51	101	134	156 + ^a	110
1949-50	—	—	131	141	86 ^b	119
1950-51	—	54 ^a	112	—	155	—
1951-52	—	94	151	163	102	127
1952-53	—	151	—	229	248	209
1953-54	2	22	—	201	—	—
1954-55	—	125	181 ^c	—	205	170
1955-56	9	58	221(3)	399(10)	409(4)	343
1956-57	34	166	288	258	87	222
		257				
Monthly average	—	109	169	218	181	

NOTES.

- (a) excludes all or part of the Lea Valley, but not more than one on other count dates for that winter ;
 (b) includes 10 counted on previous day ;
 (c) includes 26 counted one to two days late.

The averages given reflect fairly accurately what is known of the goosander population both in the period under review and in the six winters before the war. There is no clear trend from year to year, but the

four averages calculated for the period 1947-48 to 1952-53 have an average themselves of 137 compared with 245 for the three winters 1954-55 to 1956-57 which suggests the same gradual increase noted for other species of ducks.

Exceptionally high numbers have occurred in spells of hard weather, notably in the early months of 1947 and 1956 and probably also in some of the winters during the war for which we have no adequate information. In the years following the winter of 1946-47 numbers were low, but they seem to have more than recovered even if the effect of the unusually severe conditions of February, 1956, are excluded.

It is difficult to assess whether high numbers in February normally represent a late build-up of birds which have spent the earlier part of the winter further north or east or whether they are a sign of an early return movement. Certainly in February, 1956, weather conditions show almost without doubt that the new arrivals came from adjacent parts of the Continent to the east, but it is equally probable that increases in March in other years when the weather is less extreme represent a northward movement of birds for the spring migration. To what extent such a movement might be initiated in February is uncertain.

Smew

TABLE 8.

Winter	<i>Dec.</i>	<i>Jan.</i>	<i>Feb.</i>	<i>Mar.</i>
1947-48	—	102	113	189 ^a
1949-50	—	99	102	21 ^b
1950-51	—	184	—	80
1951-52	24	67	103	—
1952-53	66	190	160 ^c	51
1953-54	—	45 +	137 +	137 +
1954-55	48	100	179 +	76
1955-56	—	—	174 + ^d	120
1956-57	17	93	84	17
	43			
	40	110	131	69

NOTES.

- (a) includes an interpolation of 27 birds for the Lea Valley ;
 (b) includes 13 counted on previous day ;
 (c) includes 68 counted on previous day ;
 (d) excludes Littleton Res. (there were 14 there in March) ;
 (e) excludes William Girling Res. where there were 6 in February.

The 1953-54 counts are not quite complete but the omissions were unlikely to add more than 5 per cent.

Smew do not normally arrive in force until January, and by the beginning of March their numbers are already dwindling. As only two counts at the most fall within this period an annual winter average cannot safely be calculated from the data available and a better comparison is

between the highest numbers recorded in each year. It will be seen that this has been either in the region of a hundred or else a little short of 200. In early 1956 there were exceptional numbers between the count dates, and probably from 250 to 300 at the end of February. The average of the highest counts in the first four winters in the table is 144 and for the second four winters it is 154. Since the highest numbers are not necessarily on count dates this difference is too slight to be important, but it is evident that the increased numbers of wintering smew which were recorded in the late thirties have been maintained.

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A New Gull Roost in the London Area

By BRYAN L. SAGE

Summary

During the winter of 1955-1956 a new winter gull roost was formed in south-west Hertfordshire, as a result of which the roosting population of gulls in the county has greatly increased since the study by Hickling (1954). The new roost is the only one in the county to be used by the Greater Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*) and by large numbers of Herring (*Larus argentatus*) and Common Gulls (*Larus canus*).

Introduction

In 1952 the Colne Valley Water Company commenced the construction of a new reservoir, known as the Hilfield Park Reservoir, on a site in south-west Hertfordshire about 20 miles north-east of Staines Reservoirs, Middlesex, and less than half-a-mile north-west of Aldenham Reservoir, Hertfordshire. The new reservoir was filled during the spring and summer of 1955 and was first used by roosting gulls in the following winter. The area of this reservoir at top water level is about 115 acres, and it has an average depth of 37½ feet. I am indebted to the Colne Valley Water Company for these details and for permission to make observations on the premises.

Discussion

Gulls first began to roost at this site in November and December, 1955, but the maximum numbers for that winter were not reached until the last week of January, 1956. In 1957 and 1958 the maximum roosting population was reached in the second week of January. Comparative figures for these three years are shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1.
MAXIMUM ROOSTING POPULATION OF GULLS AT
HILFIELD PARK RESERVOIR 1956-1958

Date	Gt. Black- backed Gull	Herring Gull	Common Gull	Black- headed Gull	Total
23.1.1956	22	2,870	150	5,100	8,142
12.1.1957	25	3,000	300	6,000	9,325
11.1.1958	150	4,000	1,850	9,000	15,000

The increase in the numbers of roosting gulls in the second and third winters is probably due to natural development of the new roost, but is also partly accounted for by the fact that during the first winter (1955-1956) not all the gulls that gathered on the reservoir remained to roost; a proportion formerly departed about an hour before dusk to the south-west, obviously bound for Staines. This behaviour was rarely seen in the follow-

ing two winters. Gulls fly into this roost from the north, north-east, north-west and west, and are undoubtedly birds that would formerly have gone to Staines to roost. Theoretically, therefore, the Staines roost should have shown a drop in numbers following the use of Hilfield as a roost. In practice it is not possible to prove this because the numbers at Staines are so large and fluctuate to such a great extent that it is difficult to get a sufficiently accurate estimation. Prior to flying in to Hilfield many gulls gather on ploughed fields in the near vicinity and fly in just before dusk. Regular flight lines to Hilfield have been traced from beyond St. Albans and London Colney.

The main result of the formation of this important new roost is reflected in the great increase in the number of gulls roosting in Hertfordshire as a whole. Hickling (1954) in his appendix gives the total number of gulls roosting in the county from 1st-10th January, 1953, as about 5,670. His figure for Tring Reservoirs is, however, rather low as the roosting population of Black-headed Gulls (*Larus ridibundus*) there generally reaches about 8,000. The gulls which formerly roosted at Aldenham Reservoir now probably go to Hilfield. Table 2 shows the approximate numbers of gulls roosting in Hertfordshire in January, 1958. The total of 23,404 shows an increase of a little over 300 per cent on Hickling's 1953 total of 5,670.

TABLE 2.
APPROXIMATE NUMBERS OF GULLS ROOSTING IN
HERTFORDSHIRE IN JANUARY, 1958

Locality	<i>Gt. Black- backed Gull</i>	<i>Herring Gull</i>	<i>Common Gull</i>	<i>Black- headed Gull</i>
Hilfield Park Reservoir	150	4,000	1,850	9,000
Tring Reservoirs ...	—	15	25	8,000
Stockers Lake ...	—	150	—	250
TOTALS ...	150	4,165	1,875	17,250

GRAND TOTAL — 23,440

Acknowledgments

I am indebted to Mrs. S. Cowdy and K. R. Jones for making periodical counts of gulls at Tring Reservoirs and Stockers Lake respectively, and to G. Simpson for tracing flight lines of St. Albans and London Colney.

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Bird Ringing Report, 1957

The main task this year has been to continue our efforts to place the Society's Ringing scheme on the new footing made so necessary by the introduction of the B.T.O. Ringing Committee's new rules last year.

The 1956 Ringing Report stated that the remaining "B" permit ringers had been invited to change to "A" ringer status in 1957 and this change-over is now complete, thus finally winding up the old-type L.N.H.S. ringing scheme.

As foreshadowed in last year's report the following regional representatives have now been appointed to act as the focal points for group ringing within their areas:—

Mr. J. Garstang	...	responsible for the North-Western Area
Mr. A. C. Parker	...	responsible for the North-Eastern Area
Mr. D. Parr	... ..	responsible for the South-Western Area
Mr. R. P. Cordero	...	responsible for the South-Eastern Area

An explanatory circular was sent to all L.N.H.S. members in the Society's area known to be ringers informing them of this new development and it is hoped that co-operative ringing ventures will grow from close liaison between ringers and their regional representatives. The results achieved this year at the Beddington Ringing Station, where 3,666 birds of 57 species were ringed, emphasizes the value of team work and should act as a stimulus to ringers and regional representatives alike.

Ringers' stocks of L.N.H.S. issued rings are rapidly declining and the 1957 L.N.H.S. total submitted to the B.T.O. (omitting the Beddington Ringing Station total) was a mere 237 birds of 14 species ringed by six members.

Members of the Ringing Sub-Committee have abstracted recovery data relating to 314 birds of 42 species either ringed or recovered within the London area, to which must be added records of three birds ringed abroad and recovered in our area. As usual, details of the most interesting recoveries are given in the Systematic List.

At an indoor meeting on June 21st the evening was devoted to three excellent short talks, illustrated by slides, by Messrs. R. Spencer, B. S. Milne and A. C. Parker. These talks aroused considerable interest in the Ringing Scheme and enquiries were received from members wishing to become ringers.

The Ringing Sub-Committee appointed by the Main Ornithological Committee comprises Messrs. S. Cramp, F. H. Jones, B. S. Milne, E. R. Parrinder and myself. Mr. J. L. F. Parslow was subsequently co-opted to the Sub-Committee.

I should like to record my gratitude to the members of this Sub-Committee and to the regional representatives for their assistance during the year.

W. D. PARK.

Book Review

THE MUTE SWAN IN ENGLAND. N. F. Ticehurst. *Cleaver Hume Press Ltd.*, London, 1957. Price 35s.

Dr. Ticehurst has combined his historical and ornithological knowledge with rare skill to provide this fascinating account of that much-neglected bird, the Mute Swan. He brings evidence against the earlier beliefs that it was not an indigenous species, but had been introduced, either by the Romans or by Richard I on his return from Cyprus, and argues convincingly that Mute Swans had long been resident, especially in East Anglia and other parts of eastern and southern England, before their importance as a food at banquets caused them to be brought under a state of semi-domestication over wide areas. At some date unknown, but certainly before 1186, the Mute Swan had attained the dignity of a royal bird, and a series of detailed laws for its protection were enacted. The king granted permits to keep swans, and to mark them on the bill or the leg and foot to prove ownership. Dr. Ticehurst has examined 61 Swan-rolls, covering nearly 400 years, which detail the marks used in specific areas, and elaborate and strange many of them were as the fine illustrations show. (Large areas of the country, especially in the north and west, appear not to be covered by these and other records; does this reflect merely an absence of records or were there Mute Swans in these districts in a wild state?) The young were marked at the annual swan-upplings (a picturesque ceremony now surviving only on the Thames and the Rivers Yare and Wensum, near Norwich) and the author gives the detailed regulations governing the procedure, and examples of the legal battles over ownership, etc.

A valuable property, carefully protected, the Mute Swan must have been very numerous during these centuries. Though some thirty years of patient research have yielded so much, it is not possible to make any exact comparison with the 1955 census by the British Trust for Ornithology, but Dr. Ticehurst quotes a number of facts which suggest that the Mute Swan, despite the recent increase in numbers, is still not as common as it once was. Thus in 1466, 400 swans were provided for one feast at York; in 1496, the Venetian Ambassador wrote of "one or two thousand tame Swans upon the River Thames," and in 1625 John Taylor said that he passed at least two thousand swans on his voyage up the Avon to Salisbury. A change in culinary tastes led to the steady decline of the complex system of swan ownership and in the numbers of swans. He quotes some swan-uppling totals on the Thames, between London and Henley, in the last century; they varied remarkably little, between 330 and 457. By 1941, however, the figure had risen to 559, and there has been a much sharper increase in the last few years, especially on the more urban reaches, as this once royal bird has learned to scavenge round the rubbish barges and take bread from its many friends. So little is known of the early history of even the most common species that it is to be hoped that this learned work will inspire ornithologists with historical leanings to attempt similar studies of other birds.

S.C.

Recording Arrangements

The Society's Area is bounded by a circle of 20 miles radius centred on St. Paul's Cathedral. The recorders, whose names and addresses are given below, welcome records from members and non-members. It materially assists the speedy entering of records if the following points are observed.

1. Please use the Society's recording sheets, which can be obtained from the Recorders. Submit records for North of the Thames, South of the Thames, and Inner London on separate sheets.
2. Please enter records by species in the Wetmore Order, which is used in this report. It is particularly requested that date order should not be used, as this inevitably slows down the work of transferring entries from the recording sheets to the card index which is used in the preparation of the report.
3. Please submit copies of field notes for all records of rare or unusual species.
4. Completed recording sheets should be submitted in August for the period January to July, in November for the period August to October, and in the first week of January for November and December.

Copies of the B.T.O. Field List of British Birds, which is in the Wetmore Order, may be obtained from Mrs. M. Waller, 77 Princes Avenue, W.3, price 6d. each, plus postage 2d. each ; 12 copies, postage 5d.

Recorders

Inner London	...	...	...	...	A. D. TOMLINS, 33 Queen Square, W.C.1.
South of the Thames and River Thames					H. P. MEDHURST, 10 Semley Road, London, S.W.16.
North of the Thames	...	...	...		J. L. F. PARSLow, c/o Bird Room, British Museum (Natural History), Cromwell Road, London, S.W.7.

THE LONDON NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Founded in 1858

CURRENT SUBSCRIPTIONS (Minima). Payable to the Assistant Treasurer, Mrs. L. M. P. Small, 13 Woodfield Crescent, Ealing, W.5, on *January 1st each year* or on election. Cheques, etc., should be made payable to the Society. No receipts will be sent for bankers orders or cheques (Cheques Act, 1957).

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AFFILIATIONS. The Society is affiliated to the British Association for the Advancement of Science ; the South Eastern Union of Scientific Societies ; the Commons, Open Spaces, and Footpaths Preservation Society ; the British Ecological Society ; the British Trust for Ornithology ; the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society ; the Geologists' Association ; the Ray Society ; and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.
